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[NOT TO BE SHAKEN OFF.]

THE LOST CORONET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"One Sparkle of Gold," "Evelyn's Plot," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Fearful commenting
Is leaden servitor to dull delay.

Richard III.

LOUISE FERNIE stood silently contemplating the solitary tenant of the cave, with a curious rather than sympathizing expression on her dark, handsome features. Nevertheless, with her inquisition there was, perhaps, that mingling of contempt which some persons have decided to be one ingredient of pity, and she laid her hand on his arm with something of a patronizing air.

"You seem quite overcome, my lord," she said. "Do not give up like this, or I do not know what will be the consequences."

The young man looked fixedly up at her.

"I do not know who you are," he returned; "but I suppose you must have some idea of me and my position, or you would not speak thus, and, if so, I need not tell you that there is terrible ground for despair. You say well—I cannot even guess what may be the consequences."

"Not if you have a weak, cowardly heart," she returned. "But if you will listen to me you will be safe enough."

"But not innocent!" he groaned. "The stain of blood cannot be cleansed from my hands, and its retribution will follow."

"I am not so sure where the guilt really lies," she said, significantly, "and it is on that account that I have left my lady weeping by Lord Hartford's bedside, and have come hither."

"Weeping! Then she does mourn him," repeated the reclus, bitterly.

"I should scarcely think you could doubt that," was the reply. "Don't you know my lady was nearly accepted by Lord Hartford, and would have

been betrothed to him by this time but for this unlucky business?"

"Then she is a traitress, and I am a murderer!" gasped Lord Quentin, for of course it was the exasperated adversary of the wounded marquis who had found refuge in that gloomy retreat. "Life is valueless to me then, deprived as it is of all that could give it happiness. As well give up all—and die."

"Only that in a case like yours it may not be simple death," replied Louise, coolly. "There are a good many other things to consider, my lord, besides just leaving this world and what it offers us. I don't suppose the punishment of a murder is very different because it was not done in the way we common people manage these matters; and they do tell me that in England it does not make so much difference whether it is a peer or peasant that does it. How would you fancy that, my lord?"

He shuddered visibly.

"Then you do not think there is any hope?" he asked, sadly.

"There is, perhaps, a sort of hope while life lasts," she said, scornfully; "but no wise man would ever think of trusting to it. As far as I know, Lord Hartford may be gone by this time; he was at the very last gasp when I came away."

"And she could allow it! She could listen to his proposal, when already bound to me!" he mused, rather to himself than his companion. "It was base and cowardly; playing with both, false to one, whichever she meant to throw over. Who could have thought it of one so fair and noble?"

"Only it is few except the fair and high-born that get the chance," sneered Louise, coolly. "The more lovely and desirable a girl is the more it calls her to give up the best market for her charms. I don't suppose my lady is worse than others, only she has a better opportunity. A rich, young, handsome lord, the heir of a duke, was in her grasp. I can hardly blame her for trying to make the best of her opportunity."

"A good prospect for any lover of your own," observed Quentin, half diverted from his own engross-

ing sorrows by the Abigail's worldly wisdom. "Pray do you act on your own doctrines, fair Louise?"

"I don't know, and if I did I should not tell," she answered, flippantly. "Perhaps I have got the best chance in my fingers that I'm ever likely to get. Any way, I've come to help you, if I can, not to talk about what does not concern you. You must escape, my lord, if it is possible. This place might be searched, and it would be very awkward if you were to be discovered, like a fox in a trap."

Quentin shook his head.

"There is small chance of my being found here, unless by your lady's orders and information," he said. "And I would rather know the worst before I attempt a cowardly flight. So long as Lord Hartford lives I shall remain on the spot."

"There is a great deal of bravery in that," she sneered. "If I were a man and meant to stand out in a crime I would do it openly, not sneaking under ground like a mole. I am half sorry I undertook to help such a coward, who has not courage either to bear a punishment or to fly from it."

"So then it is all of a piece with the rest," said the young man, bitterly. "I suppose it is for gain that you do it, after all; and that you shall have in abundance. Your trouble will not be unrewarded, I can promise you."

"Oh, it is not for that; it is to please one to whom I am bound," replied Louise. "Do not flatter yourself that it is either for love of you or your money I give myself the risk and the trouble."

"Then she does repent, she does still love me!" said Quentin, eagerly. "It was a vain infatuation after all, and she is true to me at heart."

"Oh, don't flatter yourself," taunted Louise. "It is a very different person to my lady who has sent me to you; and, what is more, I don't suppose that, except for the scandal, she'd be at all sorry to get rid of you, my lord. There was a Countess of Mont Sorell once who might have been different; but she was like the rest of us low-born damsels, and did not understand high-born ways. You taught her the lesson first, my lord, I expect."

Quentin groaned in uncontrollable agony. "Woman, whoever sent you surely did not mean you to taunt me in my deep misery," he exclaimed, angrily. "It is enough to drive me mad, even to think of those days and the present."

"Yes, I don't suppose you can doubt that the poor girl did love you, my lord," was the meaning retort. "You did not scruple to give the last blow when she was crushed to the earth. You can scarcely complain now that it is your turn."

A sudden idea occurred to Quentin Oliphant's troubled brain.

He seized the Abigail's hand eagerly, and gazed inquiringly in her face.

"Woman, speak. Was it she? Was it Pauline who sent you here?"

Louise snatched away her fingers impatiently. "Certainly not. I have never seen or heard of that unfortunate girl since she left her own splendid house in disgrace and sorrow. If she is wise she has forgotten you long since, or has learned to hate you for your treacherous cruelty."

"No, she is too gentle to hate," murmured Quentin, sadly. "That would be more like—"

"Her supposed cousin—my own lady," interrupted Louise. "You are just right, my lord. The countess is about as haughty a woman as ever wore a coronet, and, what is more, she is a hundred times worse since she got one, which is, I suppose, only natural; and that old woman does not do her any good, whoever she is. But all this is nothing to me," she added. "I don't suppose I shall be there very long to care what sort of a temper she may have. All I have to say is that neither the true nor the false countess has employed me to save you, but some one a great deal more sensible and trusty than either of them. And what is the best safeguard for you is that it suits him for you to get away as fast as you can, though he dares not appear himself in your escape. Are you ready to go, for I have delayed too long already?"

Quentin hesitated. The love of life, the yearning desire to punish the treachery of Estella, and to prevent any chance of the accomplishment of her hopes, was well nigh sure to prevail over the passing remorse that made solitude and concealment the only endurable position.

"If you are true," he said, "sure and true, I will take the miserable alternative you offer me. But how am I to be sure that I can trust you? You may betray me into my enemies' hands if you are the worthy servant of your mistress," he added, scornfully.

"It would be a very needless waste of trouble," she returned. "I could very easily give notice to the police and have them on your track in less than two hours if I wished. Poor, weak idiot," she added, impatiently. "I begin to think my lady not so bad after all. I suppose she got weary of you for being such a craven."

Perhaps Quentin Oliphant could not have suffered a much keener punishment than to be forced to endure quietly the contemptuous taunts of the dependent of his treacherous betrothed, and had not a half-involuntary movement of hers towards the mouth of the cave warned him of the danger of his position he would perhaps have indulged the passionate resentment the insolence of the girl fired up.

But the retreating steps, the gloomy cave, the impending fate that threatened him if those steps once disappeared from sight and hearing, brought a chill dread to his mind which was even stronger than the imperious pride or rather vanity that had been his bane through life.

"Stay," he said, eagerly. "Stay. I will trust you. Indeed, it is but a choice of evils and dangers. But whither and how am I to go?"

"Leave those to me," returned Louise, coolly. "It just comes to this, my lord. If the marquis should die you may be pretty sure that the cause of the death of an heir to a dukedom will not pass uninvestigated, and that every corner in this neighbourhood is sure to be searched and your track pretty well scented out by the skilful officers that will be employed. What I intend is to conduct you by a circuitous route to a place of safety, and if one retreat gets risky I shall keep watch and have you taken off to another till the heat of pursuit is over. I, at any rate, shall have the first and surest information, and shall keep in my own hands the link of communication with you. Now come quickly and silently."

He rose from the large stone which had served him for a seat since his retreat to that gloomy cavern, and prepared to follow his conductress without another word of remonstrance or inquiry.

It was a strange change since a brief twelve hours before, when he was in the enjoyment of all that rank and wealth could give. Now he was a fugitive, with neither means to purchase his escape nor power to decide on his own course.

Pauline's terrible reverse was scarcely more striking,

if more permanent, than that of her false lover. Perhaps a thought of her in her helpless sorrow, her heroic patience, did cross his mind at that moment; but the instinct of self was yet too strong within him to allow aught save egotistical plaints and engrossing alarm to occupy his mind, and his hurried steps and cautious glances around as he obeyed the guidance of Louise betokened little save terror and anxious self-preservation in the remorseful duellist—the possible murderer of a blameless rival.

It was some hour or so afterwards ere Louise returned to the "Towers," but as she hastily glided past the woods which Edgar Ponsford's cottage skirted a tall figure suddenly crossed her path.

"Is all right?" he whispered. "Have you got it done?"

"Yes. There is no danger for the present, and I have arranged all for his journey to-morrow," she returned. "My cousin will conduct him to his own cottage for the present, then forward him in disguise if it is necessary at some future time. But even now, though I have carried out all your directions, I cannot comprehend why you should trouble yourself in the matter. What does it matter to us whether my lady marries him or the poor marquis, or whether she gets neither?"

"Never mind, my pretty Louise. Trust me, I am doing the best for you and myself," returned the man, giving her an earnest and not ungentele caress. "I intend to secure a home such as my services warrant for my bride, and there's nothing like having two strings to one's bow. I tell you, Lou, there are queer fancies in my head that, if I can prove them, would bring a thunderbolt on you called 'Towers.' But at present I will whisper them even to the winds. Now run away, my clever girl; you must not linger, or my lady will wonder at your absence."

"Oh, her head's running on other things, I should say," returned Louise, scornfully. "She dares not say much to me, I'll warrant. I wonder how the marquis is going on," she added, musingly.

"I heard that he was dead, or at the last gasp," said Edgar, carelessly. "So my Lord Quentin will have to look to it. There'll be a disturbance ere many hours are over."

CHAPTER XXXII.

None have they of this to come,
No care beyond to-day;
Yet see how all around them wait,
The ministers of human fate,
And black Misfortune's baleful train.

"Plague, dear Pauline, let us go to that pretty cottage. I am not tired at all, and I do so want to look at those beautiful chrysanthemums," exclaimed little Julia, pleadingly, as she and her governess were about to turn back from a long, wandering stroll, the day but one after their arrival at Vernon Chase.

Pauline hesitated.

"My dear child, I had much rather not," she said. "I believe that we are very close to the next estate to your Aunt Alice's. It may not be here, and I do not like venturing on other persons' property. We will inquire, and come here again."

"No, no, the flowers will be gone then, and when Aunt Alice comes she won't let us go perhaps. Come, I will be very good. I won't stay—only just peep in at the garden."

Without waiting for Pauline's reluctant consent Julia sprang over the low fence that divided the Vernon Chase park from its neighbouring estate, and was scampering over the turf to the spot she fancied so alluring.

It was evidently neglected, was that moorland, badly turfed land, and it might be that the contrast of the gay-looking flowers and ivy-covered cottage was the real cause of Julia Mercini's capricious fancy.

But as it was Pauline had no choice but to follow her, and to her light, active figure there was little difficulty in overtaking the little fugitive just as she reached the confines of the small garden.

They stood together for a few moments, Pauline anxiously endeavouring to draw away her little charge from the forbidden ground, and Julia equally determined on a still more daring feat.

"I want some of them—do ask for some," she said, wilfully.

The next instant she was clinging, shrieking and terrified, to Pauline's dress; for, as she spoke, a tall, ungainly figure rose up, as it almost seemed from the very ground, and stood before them within the garden gate.

"Yes, she shall. Don't go. You are pretty; I like you," said a voice, whose masculine tones bore an unnatural contrast to the senseless, child-like words.

Laying hold, with his long, strong arms, of Pauline's shrinking form, he opened the gate, and impelled her into the little domain.

"Thank you; please do not. We must go," said the girl, in a voice whose firmness she strove to command, as her only hope of safety, even while a vague

terror for her charge rather than herself thrilled through her whole frame.

A glance revealed to her at once the giant strength and the idiot brain of that formidable unhappy being, and she knew that all would depend on her self-possession and judgment.

"If you will give this little girl one we will go," she continued, trying to smile; "but they are too pretty to gather."

"No, no—you shan't go. You are pretty; I like you," reiterated the man.

Pauline gasped for very breath as he again tried to force her towards the door of the small dwelling.

Visions of possible or impossible crimes and horrors rose up before the white, trembling girl's brain, even while striving to calm Julia's frenzied terror, and assure her that the strange man only meant to be kind and give them some flowers.

"What's the matter? What is all this?" came on her ears like a voice from heaven, so inexpressible was her joy and relief.

A woman's somewhat bent though still tall figure appeared at the door of the cottage. Pauline sprang towards her for refuge.

At least it was a woman, and a sane one, to judge from her look and voice, and there must be some chance of escape from her interference with the idiot.

"I am so sorry; I did not mean to trespass on your garden," she said, sweetly, while Julia hid her face in her dress to shut out the dreaded man's features. "But my little pupil was so anxious to look at the flowers, then this—that is—"

She paused, afraid to hurt the feelings even of that half-witted being or his possible relative by any complaint.

"Yes, and she must come in—she must stay; she is pretty!" again shouted the man, imperiously. "Must she not, mother?"

But the woman did not reply at once to his query; she was looking earnestly at Pauline, who at the moment was clasping the little Julia soothingly in her arms, while the rich, fair hair, which hung in careless curls beneath her hat, fell forward over her face, and exposed the whole of her delicate cheeks and small ears to view.

There was beauty enough to admire in the perfect symmetry, the exquisite colouring of the outline upon which Dame Consell thus gazed.

Yet there was something in her look which spoke of a yet deeper and keener interest than admiration of the loveliness of that fair creature; and when she spoke it was in a sort of dreamy tone, as if her thoughts were far away.

"It is all right—all right," she said. "Come in, child, and this poor boy shall trouble you no more; he speaks truth. There is something to admire in nature of every kind—fair flowers of every species. Come."

Pauline had no alternative but to obey; but as she led the frightened child into the rustic dwelling she still lingered on its very threshold.

"I believe you mean kindly," she said, with a look and tone that might have touched a stone. "But if you would do the greatest favour in your power you will let us go at once. I am risking much by every moment I remain. This little girl is trusted to my care, and if any harm should happen to her the consequences and the remorse will be mine. For her sake, the innocent child, I implore you do not detain us."

The dame smiled half scornfully.

"What harm do you fear?" she said. "There is no infection in this pure air, even though you breathe it in a humble dwelling, and I will protect you from any terror that you poor unfortunate might bring to your inexperienced fancy. Sit down for a few moments. I would feast my eyes, as he says truly, on youth and loveliness for a brief space. It is hard to be shunned as a pest in old age and solitude."

Perhaps she could not have used a more crowning argument with the loving, gentle creature she addressed.

Pauline involuntarily took a few steps into the room, while Julia's panic was somewhat allayed by the sight of a splendid black cat snoozing before the fire and an equally attractive little spaniel, who bounded up to her with fascinating gambols on her entrance.

"Sit down. I would speak with you," said the dame, pointing to a chair. "It was not always with me as it is now. I could once have conversed with those as fair and perhaps better born even than your words imply you to be. Your face recalls something of those days and of one I served long and well. Will you tell me your name, young lady?" she said, quickly.

Pauline Lovett. I am only a governess in the family of Lady Alice Vernon. There is nothing that can interest you about me," said the girl, half-im-

patiently. "I can have no connection with any such high-born lady as you alluded to but now."

Dame Consell did not exactly start, she was too old and self-controlled to yield to any such weakness, but there was an expression in her eyes that spoke of unmistakable interest.

"Pauline Lovett!" she said. "What, the child of Nicholas—the niece of Ruth Lovett?"

The girl bowed her head. She could not speak, there was such bitterness in the associations that were connected with those names. Yet she longed to ask the connection between them and that lone mother of the sorely afflicted one in body and mind.

"You wonder at the question. It is easily explained," said Dame Consell, gazing keenly at her. "In my earlier life I knew your mother and your aunt. Nay, I served the same noble patrons with themselves, or rather with Ruth, and it may be shared her passions and her sins. Yet it is years—years—since I have even heard their names or spoken to one I used to know so well."

Pauline listened with a half-shiver.

It was but a haunting misery to come in contact with one who unconsciously conjured up the most terrible hours of her young life by her reminiscences. Perhaps the keen eyes of the woman detected some part of the feeling that thus disquieted her guest.

"Do not fear," she said, quickly. "And Ruth Lovett have nothing in common now, and it may be that the past brings no pleasing memories with it. That unhappy one," and she glanced at her son, "dates his misfortune from the time when Ruth and I were most closely connected in—Well, well, it is past and irrevocable. It is useless to repent now. I wonder whether she does."

Pauline looked uneasily at Julia.

"Pardon me," she said, gently; "but this is no time or place for such recollections. The young niece of Lady Alice Vernon should scarcely listen to such strange words. Please let us go."

Dame Consell was about to reply when the faint cry of some one in acute suffering was heard so distinctly that there could be no doubt of the sound, though the place whence it came was vague and doubtful to the new comer.

"You are right," exclaimed the woman, hurriedly rising from the chair she had taken. "You shall go, if you will promise me to come again, when we can speak more at large of the past. I would know something of all that has happened. Some strange rumours have reached me, even in this lone cottage, which most are afraid to approach. Will you come again, fair child?"

"If I can—if I may; but I am dependent on the will of others," returned Pauline, hastily.

"Oh, early or late you will find me here," was the reply. "And, hearken, if you should need a home—a refuge which such stray waifs in this world do sometimes lack—mind, you shall never be turned from this door. No, neither for sin nor shame—could such sit on your young brow"—she added, touching Pauline's white forehead. "For your mother's sake I would be your friend. She was good and true, and would have saved me from crime and misery had I listened to her gentle teachings."

"Thanks, thanks! I believe and I will trust you," said the girl, gratefully. "Should I need such aid I will ask it from one who remembers my mother thus. Now, please, let us go."

The faint echo, as it were, of the noise before heard perhaps strengthened the petition; and Dame Consell hastily laid her hand on her son's arm and drew him back from the door.

"Go in thither," she said, pointing to an inner chamber that stood open. "Now, young lady, you can go in safety. He will not harm you—no, nor leave this spot one foot without my permission."

Pauline hastily thanked her, and, drawing the now pacified Julia's hand within hers, sprang away like a hunted gazelle, till once again within the shelter of Lady Alice's domain.

"Julia, dear child," she said when they had at last gained their own apartments, "it will be better for neither of us to speak of this visit to the cottage. I should be sorry for your aunt to be displeased with you for your persistency, and it would be equally wrong for us to speak of what that poor woman very likely does not wish known. Unless you are questioned it will be best not to say anything—if you should be asked of course you must speak the simple truth."

"Oh, I shall not tell Aunt Alice, but when Cousin Otto comes he will want to know all about you Pauline, and if that great boy frightened you he would have him put in prison. Otto is very fond of me, and you too, Pauline," she added, simply.

Poor Pauline. Another danger seemed looming in the distance, or rather approaching near to her. Yet how even hint evil to that innocent child in the first impulse of her loving nature?

Was there never to be peace for her, even in the

refuge she had found? And the once petted heiress of Mount Sorell at that moment longed to cast herself in the grave where reposed that mother whose memory seemed the only hallowed association among her kindred.

Amidst crime, harshness, mystery, still the name of that dead Marian had power to soften the husband who was now hardened in crime, and to bring a gentle penitence to that unhappy self-accused mother's heart.

"Mother, mother. Thank Heaven for your goodness, your parity, and may it make me worthy of you," prayed the girl, in her beautiful humility.

What recked she at that moment of her lost coronet—of far-descended ancestry—of noble blood? It was a blessing to feel that the mother who had brought her into the troubled world was now an angel in Heaven.

"Mother, she is pretty. I love her," was the cry once and again of that senseless idiot. "Let her come here. I will bring her. It is all dark and dull now she is gone."

Dame Consell looked pityingly on him.

"Poor boy, poor boy! Do not break my heart, Davie, to think that the instincts of your nature are waking within you while yet they can bring but additional misery. Davie, she is not like us, she cannot live here—she would die," she added, turning to him and coaxingly passing her hand over his shaggy locks.

"And will he die?" said Davie, pointing up to the secret chamber. "He frightened her. Perhaps if he was gone she would come, mother."

There was a dangerous light in his eyes, that even the dame scarcely appreciated in its full meaning.

"We must try and get him better, Davie, and then he can go," she returned, soothingly. "Come with me. You are good, and will help me. It was you that saved him, good Davie."

She coaxingly drew him up with her along the winding stairs that led up to the secret chamber.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Oh, take me to your arms, my love,
For keen the wind doth blow;
Oh, take me to your arms, my love,
For bitter is my woe.

"WELL, Mr. Brereton, I suppose you will scarcely throw any more difficulties in the way of my taking possession of my uncle's property as his heir-at-law," said Jonas Dawes, or, as he must now be called, Jonas Freshfield.

The young barrister and the nephew were seated in the very apartment which had witnessed the last moments of the unfortunate Rashleigh.

Stanley's face was stern and fixed, quite unlike the frank sweetness of its natural expression, and the tone in which he replied would have conveyed a more severe reproof than even the cold, incredulous words he uttered.

"I shall certainly do my duty, Mr. Freshfield. And as the executor of my late client, your uncle, I shall assuredly never let the matter rest till the whole circumstances of his death are explained, and if necessary most fully punished."

Jonas laughed sneeringly.

"Of course, as a lawyer you ought to understand these things better than I do, Mr. Brereton. But as a plain man I might venture to ask whether a man can be an executor when there is no will to execute. And unless you can give me some sufficient proof of your authority I shall take the liberty to request your suspending any visits to this house till you are invited to renew them."

Stanley's high spirit was certainly stung to the very quick by the taunting truth. But there were far more important considerations in his mind than personal pride or resentment, and his answer was far more crushing in its coolness than the most violent outburst could have been.

"You might possibly be right in your conclusions, Mr. Freshfield, were it not that I am perfectly convinced that the will which your late uncle made was in existence at the time of his death, and that it was abstracted among other plunder, either by his murderer or some accomplice, and even now I still believe it probable that the whole crime will be brought to light, and the circumstances attending it fully revealed. You no doubt are aware that some most valuable jewels are missing from this very apartment, as well as the document in question. They will probably lead to the identification of the criminal."

Jonas winced visibly. A spasm of angry annoyance convulsed his face and his sallow complexion turned absolutely livid with suppressed agitation.

With an effort he suppressed the imprecation which involuntarily arose to his lips, and responded with what coolness he could command.

"Mr. Brereton, it is as well to speak plainly in this matter. Do you really mean to imply that I had

anything to do in this matter? Because, if such suspicions do cross your mind they are a foul libel that ought to be most severely dealt with. Remember the footprints on the walk on that unfortunate day. I presume you were satisfied that they were not made by any boot of mine. Take care, sir," he added, fiercely, "lest we change places as accuser and accused. It is not my temper to endure injustice patiently."

"Nor mine to be bullied into any line of conduct," said Stanley, calmly. "Your own conscience can alone tell you whether any guilt attaches to you. It may be that you will be called on to swear on your oath to the statement you have asserted. Whether you were in the house or not before Mr. Freshfield's death may perhaps be a matter of proof, but, as I said before, the jewels will be the most conclusive evidence as to the crime, and I have some clue even now to their discovery."

He fixed his eyes firmly on Jonas as he spoke, but even his sharp penetration could scarcely decide whether there was a conscious alarm in the strong features or only a natural excitement at hearing such an assertion.

"Have you finished, Mr. Brereton?" was the insolent query. "If so, perhaps you will kindly relieve me of your agreeable society. It is too exhilarating to be taken in large doses. In plain words, if you do not leave the house of your own accord I may be driven to very disagreeable necessity."

But before Stanley could decide on his compliance with the insulting mandate a shadow crossed the window, and a female figure stood at the glass door, waiting for admission. Jonas uttered a deep, low exclamation as the face and form of Esther Farn became revealed to his view, and his next words were more conciliatory to his companion.

"You see I have other visitors, Mr. Brereton. At least you must confess this is my own domain till you can prove it otherwise, and that I have a right to choose its guests."

Stanley rose with quiet dignity.

"I wish I could accept your assurance, Mr. Freshfield. But I am no hypocrite, and I tell you fairly that if ever I cross this threshold again it will be on a painful but most decisive errand. For the sake of him that is gone I will even yet hope that the hands of his nearest of kin are not stained with blood and crime."

He inclined his head as he spoke with a cold, haughty bow, and, opening the glass door, which had proved so fatal a means of ingress and egress, he left the room while admitting the tall woman whose somewhat remarkable features he noted even in that passing glance.

Esther gave him a sharp, penetrating look as she entered, and then coolly threw herself on the chair he had vacated.

"So I have found you at last, Jonas," she said, gazing around her with provoking composure. "It was a pity you forgot to give me your address when you left in such a hurry. But though I have had some trouble I have succeeded, you see, and have just arrived at a happy juncture. I suppose you were anxious to make all smart and ready for me before you showed me my new home—oh, Jonas?"

"Don't be foolish, woman. You know I told you before that such fancies were perfect nonsense, and if you don't mind I shall take some way of punishing you that you might not like. It would have served you right to have knocked you down when you came without leave while I had a gentleman with me, and you'd better not try it on again."

"I'm not at all afraid, Jonas. Perhaps it is as well for you that it was a gentleman whom I found here. If it had been a woman it would have put you in a queer place, Master Dawes, or whatever you call yourself. Pray do you know where that silly wisp of a girl is gone who you pretended to be sweet upon?—though I knew all the time your love was mine, Jonas dear, so it does not signify. I came this morning to know when we are to be married. I like this house so well that I don't care how soon I am its mistress."

"Never!" he thundered, fiercely. "never. Woman, if you ever make such insolent absurdity again I will have you shut up as a maniac."

"And perhaps you would be in a similar box for a worse cause," she replied, significantly. "Take care, Jonas Dawes, or Freshfield as the case may be; I can expose you to the world as a double-dyed villain if you provoke me. Harkye! I know that you were here on the morning of your uncle's murder, and it may well be that the guilt will lie at your door."

"It is an infamous falsehood!" he exclaimed, eagerly. "I will swear that I am as innocent of his blood as you are yourself. You cannot, you dare not attempt such monstrous perjury."

"You could swear," she said, scornfully. "And to what avail is your oath—you who have been again and again perjured, who have committed the darkest

crimes save the one you now deny, who have broken even to me the most solemn oath that ever deceived foolish woman? I tell you, Jonas, I would in half an hour unmask your perfidy and your sins. It rests with you to make me your friend or foe."

He quailed under her withering, hard scorn, her relentless eyes, her stern voice.

"Esther, I would not do you wrong—not willing wrong. But I ask you, in your inmost heart can you believe there would be happiness in the union you demand? I would not pain you by any needless harshness, but yet you cannot but know your education and birth and habits are no match for mine. I could not present you to my friends as my wife, and you would be miserable and desolate in the necessary isolation you must endure. Come, Esther, be rational. I will make you any compensation, settle on you enough to procure you a husband more suited to you, only be a sensible woman and not a lunatic."

She looked steadfastly at him.

"Jonas, I am as likely to wed another man as you are to marry that fair creature, who was as much above you in birth and breeding as you fancy yourself to be superior to me. I have made up my mind, and I shall not change. Either you will fix a time for our wedding, or else it is very unlikely that you will have the liberty or the power to have another wife. I know more than you imagine, and I am more relentless than you may suppose. Choose, now and for ever, between the two."

It was a solemn pause that ensued. The eyes of Jonas were bent on the ground, while Esther's were riveted upon his thoughtful features. She guessed the struggle in his mind, and a sort of sour triumph beamed in her dark eyes and thin lips at the pain she had in her power to inflict.

At last the contest seemed at an end, but yet to the woman's practised eyes there was something suspicious in the very blandness of his smile when he again addressed her.

"I will not deceive you, Esther. You know perfectly well that our circumstances are completely different, and that the position and the wealth to which I have succeeded are uncongenial with the station you have always occupied. It is for you to decide between my belief and yours. I feel convinced that it is for the happiness of both that we should give up any foolish idea of uniting our fates and living together. But still, as I have pledged my troth—as you have a right to insist on its fulfilment—I am willing to leave all in your hands and perform my promise in three months from this time, should you desire it."

"Say, rather, that I have a hold on you which you dare not shake off," replied Esther, contemptuously. "Jonas, you cannot blind me to your baseness, and I tell you fairly that unless I had a firm grasp over you and yours I should not dare to link my fate with yours; as it is it suits me to occupy the station of your wife, and I accept your terms. In three months from this date—which by the way will be the merry month of May—I will prepare all for the wedding; and I would advise you not to attempt to slip me, unless you would pass the knot over your throat instead of the hand."

"What nonsense," he said, hurriedly. "As if I did not know you pretty well, Esther, and treat you as a woman, not a foolish girl to be bamboozled at pleasure. But still I would take an oath the last instant I had to live that I am innocent of my uncle's death and all belonging to it. On my word of honour, on all that is true and sacred, I speak truth, Esther, and you do me wicked wrong if you try to prove me guilty."

She gazed earnestly at him as she rose to depart.

"Heaven alone can tell," she said, impatiently. "I know you to be an unscrupulous and wicked man, and yet I love you, and if you are true to me I will guard you from your enemies and from yourself. But, if not, no power on earth shall shield you from the punishment you deserve."

(To be continued.)

THE FORCE OF MORAL INFLUENCE.—There are certain evils which affect society, and which do their full part in making this a world of woe. There is squalid, miserable poverty; there is disgusting, lamentable vice; there is horrible crime. All these things, it is said, are inevitable; they spring from the nature of man, and from the laws which compel him to dwell in social connection. Those who say so are shallow thinkers. The world is naturally a beautiful world. But what the Omnipotent has made a Paradise for our dwelling-place mankind have often rendered a desert by their crimes. Nature and revelation alike proclaim that the Creator intended we should be happy; but how has brutal ignorance, vile intemperance, gross crime, and every species of evil desire blighted our comforts and degraded our immortal being! It has never yet been proved that there must necessarily be poverty, which is

the source of many evils. A striking instance of the absence of poverty in a large class of society is found in the case of the Quakers, or community of Friends. With some peculiarities in speech and dress, not worth while to heed, this numerous body of individuals act upon a fixed, uniform principle of suppressing the passions. They curb the appetites and headlong impulses of human nature. They are subject to the same temptations and perversions that we are, yet by the exercise of a singular degree of prudence, they avoid them. Here, then, is a clear demonstration that even without the aid of civil power, but by the mere force of moral influence, there is a class of men in the midst of society who do escape disgraceful poverty and who are generally free from vice and crime.

SCIENCE.

ONE of the salts most sensitive to heat is the double iodide of silver and mercury. Its natural colour is yellow, but it turns red if warmed, and returns to yellow again on cooling.

STREET RAILWAYS IN VIENNA.—The Street Railway Company in Vienna have 340 cars, of which 80 to 150 are in daily use. In 1870 the greatest number of persons carried in one day (24th May) was 138,978, the number of cars running on that day being 206, and horses 937. The number of persons carried during the year is estimated at 15 millions.

CONSUMPTION OF PETROLEUM IN ITALY.—From the most recent returns published by the Custom House it appears that the quantity of petroleum imported into and consumed in Italy yearly was as follows:—In 1869, 295,265 quintals; 1870, 383,540; and, during the first three months of 1871, 241,800, so that it may be presumed that the entire consumption during that year amounted to at least 450,000 quintals.

PRINTING ON GLASS.—A Frenchman named Wilbaux has taken out a patent to use an elastic type for printing on glass, with fluor spar rendered adhesive by some such material as printing ink. Sulphuric acid of suitable temperature is then allowed to act on that portion of the glass. The hydrofluoric acid generated in this way would etch the glass on the places printed on. When completed the whole is washed off with warm water or lye.

JAPANESE PORCELAIN.

The Japanese artists have long distinguished themselves in the ornamentation of porcelain, and many of their styles are of great beauty and originality. Their blue-and-white wares are somewhat similar in general appearance to those made by the Chinese, but can be readily distinguished from them by any one conversant with the peculiarities of Japanese art.

The most beautiful and artistic of all the fictile wares of Japan is the Satsuma. This is made in the province of Satsuma, situated in the south-west of the island of Kinsin. The body of the ware is of delicate cream or vellum tint, and is covered with a thick, transparent glaze, which is in nearly all cases crackled. On this soft-toned ground, figures, birds, flowers, and conventional designs are painted in the most exquisite manner imaginable. The freedom and grace infused into every line of the flower and bird subjects are astonishing, while the colouring is soft and refined.

Another beautiful ware, richly ornamented with red and gold, is made in Japan, in the district belonging to the Prince of Kanga. The ornamentation of this ware is infinitely more minute and laboured than that of Satsuma, but is far inferior to it in artistic excellence. Kanga ware appears to be held in great estimation in Japan, no doubt on account of its fine colour and intricate ornamentation. The Japanese frequently lacquer articles of porcelain, sometimes entirely and sometimes partially. When entirely covered they are treated, as regards their decoration, in a similar manner to ordinary lacquer work; when only partially covered two methods are adopted. The first method consists in grounding in with lac all portions of the object, excepting those which have been already decorated and intended to remain in their original state; and the second method consists in taking the porcelain itself as the ground, and ornamenting it with raised designs in gold and coloured lacs.

BRANDY FROM WOOD SHAVINGS.

C. G. ZETTELUND has been making some experiments in the distillery at Hulta to make brandy out of shavings. For this purpose they were boiled in an ordinary kettle under a pressure of 0.116 kilograms of steam to the square centimetre. There was then put into the kettle—Shavings (pine and fir, very wet), 9.0 cwt.; sulphuric acid, 1.18 sp. gr., 0.7 cwt.; water, 30.7 cwt.—Total, 40.4 cwt.

After boiling for eight and a half hours the mass

of shavings contained 3.33 per cent. grape sugar, and after eleven hours' cooking 4.38 per cent. A farther increase in the quantity of sugar could not be attained. There was obtained in all, from the 40.4 cwt., about 1.77 cwt. of grape sugar, or 19.67 per cent. of the weight of the shavings. The acid was neutralized by lime, so that the cooled mash ready for fermentation contained one half-degree of acid, according to Lundersdorff's acid tester. The mash had a temperature of 30 degrees C. when the yeast prepared from only 20 pounds of malt was added. At the end of 96 hours the mash had done fermenting, was then distilled and yielded 61 quarts of 50 per cent. brandy at 15 degrees C., perfectly free from all flavour or smell of turpentine, and of a very pure taste.

It is more than probable that the manufacture of brandy from shavings on a large scale would succeed if it were ascertained, by experiment, with how much water the acid must be diluted, and how long it must be boiled, for both of these circumstances exert a great influence over the production of sugar.

If it were possible to convert the whole of the cellulose in the shavings into sugar, each hundred-weight of air-dried shavings would yield about seven gallons of brandy of 50 per cent. The shavings of the leaf-bearing trees would probably give the best results.

PRINTING FROM IRON.

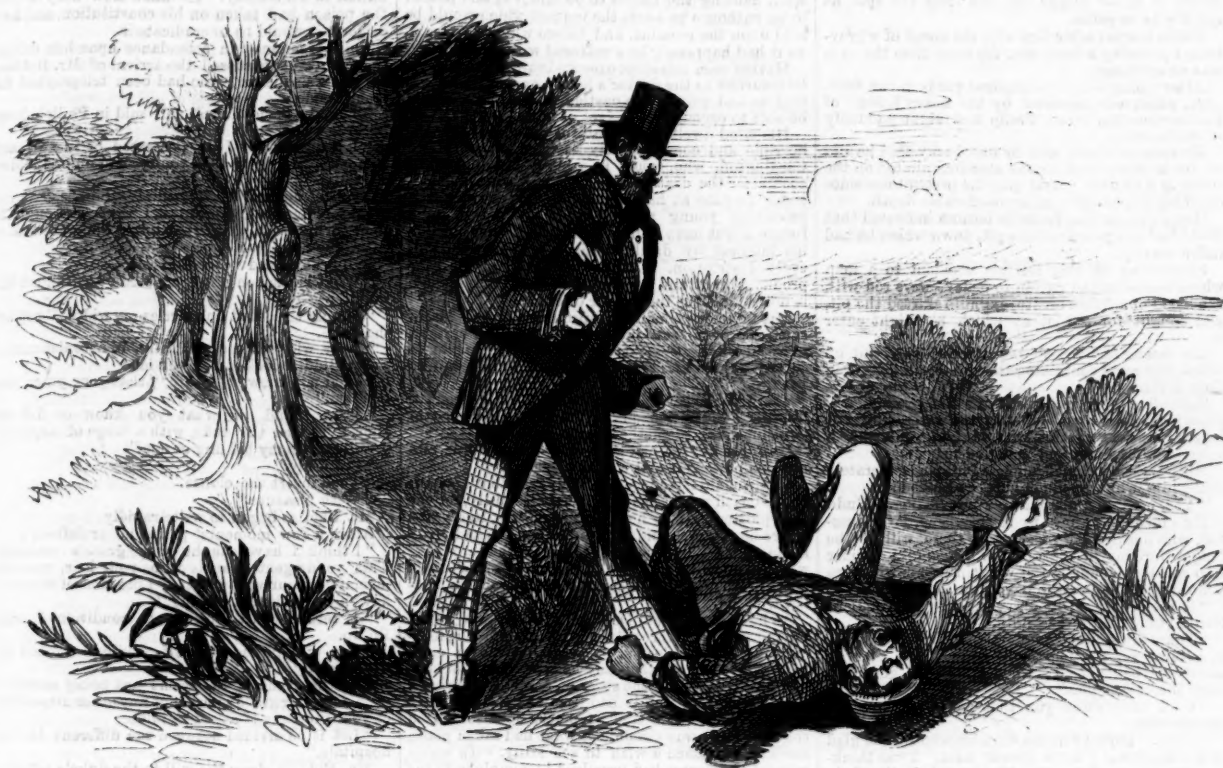
MR. VAN RUTH, who has for several years acted as inspector of iron for the Dutch Government, has from time to time turned his attention to discovering some means of examining the fibre of iron, and recording it for the purpose of comparison. After several trials he has arrived at an extremely simple and efficient method of obtaining the results required.

The sample of iron whose fibre is to be examined is first planed, so as to expose a suitable section, through any desired point; this section is immersed in muriatic (hydrochloric) acid for such time as is necessary to eat out the cinder; this time varies from six hours to twenty-four hours, according to the strength and temperature of the acid solution. The cinder is attacked in a more rapid manner than the fibre of the iron, and the effect is that the fibre is left in relief—in fact an etched plate is formed, from which, by suitable ink or other substance, an engraving may be printed, showing every fibre of the iron in a clear and distinct manner. The application of this simple process is too obvious to need much description. Whenever the formation of piles in a rail, round or other section of iron, is required, here is a quick and handy method for discovering it. As a means of studying the alteration of fibre in the neighbourhood of welds it is invaluable. It may also be applied in supplying information in relation to M. Tresca's valuable memoirs on the flow of solids.

LIGHT, HEAT, AND ELECTRICITY FROM MOTION.

THE celebrated Jacob Perkins when in London, in 1837, exhibited at the Adelaide Gallery the phenomena produced by the contact of soft iron with steel in motion, and which he described at the time as follows:

"The action of a soft iron disc upon hard steel, such as a file, is exhibited four times a day. This has been regularly kept up for three years, yet it has undergone very little wear. I am of opinion, in fact, that if the file had never been held upon it until it had attained its full velocity, there would not have been any loss of metal. I do not know to what extent the combustion of steel by soft iron may have been carried in America, but our experiments are so brilliant as to excite the highest admiration, and to induce numbers to repeat their visits to the gallery. Our disc is a foot in diameter and an eighth of an inch thick. It requires about a three-horse power to drive it, and revolves about 6,000 times in a minute. It is very accurately fitted up with friction wheels. The blaze of light, which rises about 12 inches, perpendicularly, from the point of contact, is so vivid that few persons can look steadily at it even at noon day. The stream of light is about an inch and a half thick at the distance of a few inches from the point of contact; and at the distance of 7 or 8 feet it spreads out to about 10 inches. The sparks not unfrequently touch the ceiling, which is about 20 feet high; a ring of fire is seen all around the disc, appearing like a band of light about five eighths of an inch wide. Of what does this light consist? It is manifestly different from that of the sparks, which all fly off in a tangent. In operating with the disc it never becomes warm; the file, however, has to be held at least two inches from the sharp end, as it becomes highly heated. The whole appearance, in fact, is very interesting, and when fully investigated I am well convinced that some of the phenomena will be found to depend upon electricity."



[GIVEN AND TAKEN.]

BREAKING THE CHARM.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Tempting Fortune," "Scarlet Berries," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Ambition this shall tempt to rise,
Then whirl the wretch from high,
To bitter scorn a sacrifice,
And grinding infamy.

Gray.

His ambitious designs defeated, his wicked schemes set at naught, his spirit humbled by detection, and his personal liberties jeopardized by the untiring efforts of the duke's friends, Lord Cardington had no alternative but to quit the mansion as Doctor Kingsford had advised him.

Man of the world as he was, he could not but admit to himself that he had played a high and dangerous game which he had lost.

Perhaps the evil was not irremediable, though that must be a question of time; at present he was overwhelmed and crushed by the force of a stunning blow. There are times when the cleverest men cannot think—their brains will not serve them—rest and an utter absence of excitement are required for the refreshing of the mind; and in a state of fury bordering on despair his lordship rushed from the house and wandered about the spacious park attached to the castle, baring his fevered brow to the breeze and seeking in vain to acquire that calmness of which he stood in need.

In his troubled state he recalled the weird stories, principally coming from German sources, which represent men troubled in the spirit calling upon the foul fiend himself for aid, which at the price of their immortal souls is granted them; and had the spirit of evil then and there appeared to Lord Cardington there is little doubt that he would have gladly bargained his soul in order to triumph over his enemies and obtain that precious metal called gold which he had so fervently worshipped all through his bad and wicked life.

But no fiend appeared to him, no mode of extricating himself from his troubles presented itself to his mind. He had played his last stake and lost, so that, like the ruined gambler, he had to wander forth, a beggar in credit, money, and reputation.

Mrs. Compton's timely discovery and exposure had happened most inopportunistically for him; the duke could not much longer have withstood the subtle action of the poison which his nephew had been administering to him in homoeopathic doses. His lordship regretted bitterly now that he had not increased the amount of the poison so as to have brought on a disastrous termination sooner, for even in the extremity of his misery and defeat he

did not feel any compunction for the awful crime of which he had been guilty, for he who tries to take away life is as culpable as the one who actually accomplishes his purpose, and surely if there is one offence against morality more revolting than another it is the slow poisoning of a fellow creature.

The angry passion, the sudden blow dealt in the heat of temper, however disastrous its consequences may be, may and does allow of the plea of extenuating circumstances, but he who watches the life of his friend or relation ebb slowly away under his own destructive and fatal agency is a miscreant upon whom compassion is wasted and in whose behalf pity itself becomes superfluous and absurd.

Probably the Duke of Lewes would so far recover as to be able to make a will alienating his property from his nephew. To Cardington the future was now black and hopeless. He was utterly at fault, and he wandered to and fro until the falling shades of night warned him that he must seek some shelter.

He was turning towards the lodge, to leave the park, when he was confronted by a man dressed in the rough attire of a labourer on the tramp. The fellow's appearance was wild and savage; he resembled one at war with society, accustomed to privations, among which hunger and exposure to the weather were frequent occurrences.

There was yet light enough left by the dying day to enable them to see one another's faces, and the tramp uttered a hoarse cry of recognition as he advanced to within a foot or two of his lordship.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, in a truculent voice, "we have met at last, my lord. I knew we should. I have waited for this hour of triumph, which has come at last, and I will wager something that you would rather have come across the fiend himself than me at such a time and in such a place."

"Who are you?" replied Lord Cardington, in a tremulous voice, for he liked neither the tone nor the manner of his singular accoster.

"Must I refresh your memory? Very well; be it so. I am Thomas Rudd, the Whitechapel convict, whom you hired to murder Mrs. Mallison, the lady in Bryanston Square. We last met at the fisherman's cottage at Weymouth, when I escaped from Portland Island, and I have wandered about the country ever since, hiding from the police, afraid to go home to my starving wife, and dreading my own kind."

"If you did anything for me you were paid for it, and there is an end of the matter," said Cardington, whose pallor increased visibly in spite of the darkness.

"No, there is not an end of it," answered Rudd, with a savage smile. "I am poor, hunted, ruined, and starving. I want money, and must have it."

"You will have none from me. I too am ruined and desperate," exclaimed Lord Cardington. "You could not have come in contact with me at a worse time for yourself. Beware how you provoke me. Stand on one side, fellow, and let me pass."

"You don't escape me so easily, Lord Cardington," rejoined the man. "I have sought you high and low, and I am not going to let you slip through my fingers now my opportunity has come."

"Peace, idiot!" cried his lordship, endeavouring to pursue his way.

The convict barred his progress, and in a moment of desperation Lord Cardington dashed out his fist and struck him to the earth. A ring which he wore on his finger inflicted an ugly gash on the man's cheek, from which the blood flowed sluggishly.

Roused to madness by the blow, Rudd sprang to his feet and grasped his assailant by the throat, uttering hoarse cries the while like those of a wild beast while engaged in strangling its prey.

A knife gleamed in the imperfect light and disappeared once, twice, thrice in Lord Cardington's body.

His lordship fell to the ground with a groan, and lay there still and motionless.

Rudd gazed sullenly upon him, shrinking as it were from his dread work in that awful solitude; then he stooped down and began to rifle the pockets of the dead man, transferring trinkets and money such as he found to his own person.

"He would have it," he muttered. "It was his own doing; he should not have trifled with such as I am. What is human life to me?"

When he had completed his work of robbery he turned to depart, dreading lest some keeper might come upon him and arrest him for the murder.

At this moment he perceived that he was not unobserved; a young man with a stout stick in his hand gazed upon him suspiciously.

It was Philip Mallison, whose anxiety to know what was going on at the castle had induced him to leave the doctor's house and walk across the park to glean such intelligence as might be obtained from the domestics.

Instantly conceiving that a murder had been committed, and that the culprit stood before him—although he did not as yet know the rank and condition of the victim—he attempted to seize Rudd, who cried:

"Stand back, as you value your life! I've no quarrel with you; let me go free!"

"I will not," answered Philip, resolutely. "A crime has been committed, and apparently by you; surrender yourself into my hands!"

Rudd regarded him for a moment as if he contemplated making an attack upon him, but, thinking

better of it, he turned and ran from the spot as quickly as he could.

Philip started after him with the speed of a greyhound pursuing a hare, and for some time the race was an even one.

After going some few hundred yards in the darkness, which was increased by the heavy foliage of the surrounding trees, Philip lost sight suddenly of the fugitive.

He stopped short, and it was lucky that he did so, for he found that he was standing almost on the brink of a disused gravel pit, the precipitous sides of which sloped down to a considerable depth.

Groans proceeding from the bottom indicated that Rudd had not perceived the pit, down which he had fallen heavily.

Shuddering at this terrible accident to a man whose hands he had reason to believe were red with the blood of a fellow creature, Philip skirted the pit, and sought for a spot at which he might enter it.

The means of doing so was supplied by a road, up which the carts containing the gravel used to drag their loads.

Stumbling over inequalities in the ground, and plunging through pools of stagnant water, Philip at length found the convict, who was lying on his back, a bruised, bleeding, and mangled man.

His groans continued, and, as Philip considerably asked him if he was much hurt, he replied:

"Yes, my lad. I am done for now. Thomas Rudd will no longer be a pest to society. Lord Cardington, who lies dying on the grass there, will not be long before me in the other world, and I wonder who will be accounted the worst, the one who does a murder or the one who pays him to do it."

"Is the body I saw before you really that of Lord Cardington?" inquired Philip.

"There is not much doubt of that," replied Rudd, in a faint voice; "no more doubt than there is about his being dead; when I strike I generally drive the knife home."

"Do I understand you that you were hired to murder him?"

"Not I. Perhaps he has enemies who will be glad of his death, but I know none of them. I was thinking of another affair. He hired me to kill a lady named Mallison, and—"

"Good Heaven! My mother!" interrupted Philip, aghast, thinking how strange was the accident which had made him the means of bringing his mother's assassin to his death.

"If your name's Mallison, perhaps it is so," said Rudd, growing weaker every moment. "I killed her at that villain's bidding, and I'm sorry for it, as she never did me any harm; but as for sticking my knife into that diagrae to the peerage I can't say it troubles me much; and now, as I'm going fast, if you can say a prayer out of your charity for me, young man, perhaps it may be counted in my favour up there."

He looked upward at the vault of heaven, in which stars were beginning to appear like lamps on the road to Paradise.

Philip sank on his knees by the side of the dying convict, and, in a solemn and hearty tone, offered up a supplication for the soul of the dying man, which he hoped might be reckoned for good when it reached the throne of grace.

It was a solemn scene.

The crescent moon was just struggling through the clouds, and casting silvery gleams upon the rugged clefts of the old pit, causing the pools of water to glisten like will-o'-the-wisps, and shining like a halo upon Philip's forehead, as he knelt with his face piously upturned to the skies, while, as if for the purpose of displaying a singular contrast, not a ray lighted up the countenance of the dying man, who lay in a dense, dark, funeral shadow.

For some minutes Philip prayed for the man who had murdered his mother—prayed too for that other erring mortal, with whom while living he had been at variance, who was already in the grasp of death, which at a fitting time had cut short the career of Claude Lord Cardington.

Having finished his supplication, he rose and bestowed his attention once more upon Rudd, to whom he spoke, but the man gave him no answer; his spirit had fled even while the words of intercession were on the lips of Philip. The stony stare of death was in his eyes, the death-damp was on his brow, and he who had outraged and defied his Creator had gone to answer for his audacity before the awful judgment seat of the life to come.

Turning away sick at heart, Philip retraced his steps to the spot where Lord Cardington was lying, to ascertain if it were possible to render any assistance in that direction.

Here, as with Rudd, the case was the same; a hand placed on the heart convinced the inquirer that all was over, for not the smallest pulsation rewarded his effort.

With his mind in a whirl he hurried to the lodge, and, telling the keeper of it to come with his son and bring lanterns directly, he guided them to the fatal

spot, causing the bodies to be removed and placed in an outhouse to await the inquest which would be held upon the remains, and before which he would, as it had happened, be a material witness.

Having seen this order executed to his satisfaction, he returned to the doctor's house, expecting to find that he had quitted the castle and that they would be able to exchange a budget of news.

His mind dwelt with a painful sensation upon the horrible and comparatively early death of Lord Cardington, who, when he commenced his career, soon after the death of his father, having a handsome fortune at his command, was accounted a promising young nobleman, to whom a splendid future might have been secured had he not clouded his intellect by drink, dissipation, and excess of every description. Extravagance had in his case produced want, and want brought on by recklessness is not seldom the forerunner of crime.

His infamous conduct respecting Ariadne Mallison had provoked the just resentment of her mother, to avoid whose persecutions and denunciations in society he had hired an assassin to put an end to her life.

Truly did the ancients say that the descent of Avernaus—that poisonous entrance to the region of punishment in the nether world—was easy.

Lord Cardington had gone from bad to worse, and now his power for evil was at an end.

Philip could not conceal from himself that his lordship's death would prove beneficial to Milly, for the arch plotter against her happiness was unable to injure her farther, and such an impression had Milly made upon Philip's susceptible heart that anything which would be productive of happiness to her could not fail to give him a sensation of unaffected delight.

As he had expected, Dr. Kingsford was at home, having shortly before returned from the castle, leaving the duke in a deep sleep, which was of a more healthy description than any he had enjoyed of late. He related to Philip the story of Lord Cardington's villany and how well it had been detected by Mrs. Compton's firmness and sagacity, he also stated that the duke was sensible of what had taken place, and had expressed a wish to see Milly, with which request the doctor had promised to comply with the utmost possible despatch.

Important as he considered his news it paled effectually before that which Philip had to narrate to him, and when the tale was concluded he exclaimed, emphatically:

"Let no one henceforth say that Providence does not interpose in the affairs of men. I can see the hand of Heaven as plainly as the king of old saw the writing on the wall in this dreadful end of Lord Cardington, whose vices were so flagrant that it would be difficult to believe he had ever been virtuous."

In the course of subsequent conversation Dr. Kingsford expressed his determination to visit the commissioners of lunacy at their office in London, and by a representation of facts procure Milly's release on the morrow, or as speedily as possible.

Philip declared his willingness to go to the castle and watch by the side of his patron's sick-bed and acquaint him with the fact of Lord Cardington's melancholy death, which he did not think would affect him injuriously, as for a length of time there had been—to use a familiar phrase—no love lost between them.

Their plans being thus arranged they cordially shook hands and retired to rest.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Thus sheltered, free from care and strife,
May I enjoy a calm through life. *The Wish.*

DR. KINGSFORD did not feel that he should experience much, if any, difficulty in freeing Milly from the unjust confinement in which the villany of Lord Cardington had placed her, and he started on his journey expecting to return that evening, or the following day at farthest, in company with her.

After breakfast Philip Mallison drove to the castle, and was informed that the duke had passed a quiet night, but that his graver symptoms had shown no signs of abatement.

His grace received his protégé with pleasure, and listened with astonishment to his account of Lord Cardington's death.

"A terrible retribution has overtaken him," he said. "His attempt upon my life, which was so happily frustrated, was not, I fear, the worst episode of his career, but though he was discovered before he had completed his purpose I do not think that I can recover."

"I trust your grace will not indulge in such gloomy anticipations," said Philip. "There ought to be many happy years before you yet."

"I am old, my dear boy, and my constitution has been severely tried by the treatment I have received," answered the duke. "We will hope for the best however."

In spite of this declaration it was evident that the Duke of Lewes did not expect a favourable termi-

nation to his malady. He knew how deep a hold the poison had taken on his constitution, and how difficult it would be to eradicate it.

Philip remained in attendance upon him during the day, and witnessed the arrival of Mr. Biddles, his grace's solicitor, who had been telegraphed for from London.

The duke made his will and said in Philip's hearing:

"I bequeath all I am possessed of in real and personal property to that young man on one understanding."

"Mr. Mallison," exclaimed Mr. Biddles, "as you are interested in the bequest I think you ought to come forward and hear what terms his grace wishes to impose upon you."

Philip advanced to the bedside.

"What is the condition, my lord?" continued Mr. Biddles.

"Simply this, that he marries my widow," replied the duke.

"Your widow!" cried Philip, in astonishment.

Mr. Biddles looked confounded.

"I did not know," he said, "that your grace was married."

"Never mind, sir, what you know or did not know," replied the duke, with a tinge of asperity.

"Will you do my bidding or not?"

"Certainly."

"Then insert the clause."

"With pleasure."

Mr. Biddles began to write rapidly.

After a few moments' pause he exclaimed:

"I think I have caught your grace's meaning. This young gentleman is to be your heir, provided he marries your widow, a lady I presume of whom we have hitherto heard nothing."

"I refuse wealth on those conditions," cried Philip.

"You will please yourself, Philip," replied the duke, mildly.

"In the event of the terms not being complied with, has your grace thought of any other disposition of your property?" asked Biddles.

"Let it be divided between the different London hospitals."

Mr. Biddles drew the will to the duke's satisfaction, and it was duly signed and attested.

Philip Mallison left the room, feeling that the duke would not suffer in his absence, as Mrs. Compton was in attendance upon him, and when Mr. Biddles came downstairs he stopped him in the hall and expressed a wish to speak to him.

The solicitor followed him into the dining-room, where a substantial repast was spread out before them, and without making an apology for gratifying his appetite said he could listen while he was eating, and begged his young friend to unburden his mind.

"Do you not think," exclaimed Philip, while the substantial viands were disappearing before the knife and fork of the lawyer, "that his grace is scarcely himself?"

"Mad you mean," replied Biddles.

"That is my impression, certainly."

"I don't know—I can't tell," said the solicitor, cautiously. "It is difficult to form an opinion in such cases. If he is mad I never had a client who gave his instructions more clearly."

"Why should he want me to marry his widow, and who is she?"

"Time will show. Some of our greatest men have had their secrets, which they have kept very closely, and whether young and pretty, old or ugly, she will be a duchess. Fancy the éclat of going into society as the 'Duchess of Lewes and Mr. Philip Mallison.'"

"I won't do it," exclaimed Philip, resolutely.

"What do I care about her rank, or what do I want with money? I have my mother's fortune, which is quite enough for my wants."

"Is your heart engaged elsewhere, eh?" asked Mr. Biddles, with one of his sly but good-natured smiles.

"I don't mind confessing the truth to you—it is," answered Philip.

"And to whom? Shall I guess?"

"If you guess right I shall say you are a sorcerer."

"I can't pretend to any acquaintance with the black art, yet I can give a shrewd guess at the quarter in which your attachment is situated. You love Miss Milly Haines."

Philip's eyes fell before the inquisitive gaze of the lawyer.

"By Jove, you are right," he answered; "and I am not ashamed to own it. Miss Haines is a paragon of beauty; to see her is to love her, and when I reflect on her kindness to me in giving up her property, for it was hers since my mother gave it her, I feel sure that her mind is as amiable as her person is beautiful."

"You are not a bad-looking fellow, Mr. Mallison," said Mr. Biddles, "if you will allow me to say so, and I do not see why you and Miss Haines should not make a very loving couple."

"No such luck, I am afraid," replied Philip, sadly. When the lawyer had finished his luncheon he took his departure, being driven to the railway station. He had business to attend to in town, and could not spare any more time in the service of his wealthy client.

Soon afterwards Philip Mallison again sought the sick-room.

The duke did not attempt to enter into conversation with him. He slept a good deal, and the pain he had formerly suffered did not appear to be so acute.

All that day Philip pondered over the strange will that the Duke of Lewes had made.

Who was the widow that his patron wished him to marry? and why did he place such a singular restriction on his actions?

It was impossible to get at the bottom of the riddle, which was as difficult of solution as that of the Sphinx.

The day passed, and so did the night. Philip, worn out with watching, retired to rest.

No improvement in the duke's condition took place. A practitioner in the neighbourhood sent by Dr. Kingsford attended to his grace, and he gravely shook his head when interrogated as to the patient's symptoms.

Philip waited with the utmost impatience for the return of Dr. Kingsford, and he was extremely gratified to see him about three o'clock in the afternoon.

"Are you alone, doctor?" he exclaimed.

"No. Miss Haines is downstairs. I have not thought it prudent to bring her to the presence of his grace until I see how he is," replied the doctor.

"May I attend her?"

"May you?" replied Dr. Kingsford. "Of course you may, but I must ask you a question—Has any one arrived at the castle during my absence?"

"Yes, a clergyman, the reverend Hubert Proctor. He has been here all the morning."

"What did he say?"

"Very little," answered Philip. "He would wait until you came; that was all the information I could get out of him."

"Will you kindly request Miss Haines and Mr. Proctor to step upstairs?" said Dr. Kingsford.

"At once?"

"Immediately."

"Shall I accompany them?" asked Philip, becoming more and more bewildered.

"No. You will oblige me by remaining within call until you are sent for."

Dr. Kingsford sprang upstairs and thus prevented further conversation, while Philip, muttering to himself "I cannot understand this. I am like one in a dream," went downstairs to follow the instructions given him by the worthy doctor.

It was clear that the doctor's representation in high quarters had procured Milly's release from the asylum where she had been so unjustly detained. It was equally evident that she had come down to the castle with Dr. Kingsford and was at that moment in the house.

No wonder that Philip was bewildered. Events crowded upon him.

Lord Cardington was dead, Milly free, and he himself the heir to the duke's property should he die, always provided that he complied with the strange condition that he should marry his grace's widow. Who was this mysterious female? What was she like, and where was she to be found?

These questions disquieted Philip's mind.

When he entered the drawing-room and beheld Milly he vowed inwardly that no amount of wealth should ever tempt him to marry any one but her, and if she would not have him he would remain single all the days of his life for her sake.

Milly shook hands with him kindly, and greeted him with a smile.

He delivered his message, and the Reverend Mr. Proctor, with whom she had been earnestly conversing, took her by the hand and led her away.

Philip threw himself into a chair, and pressed his hands to his head, which throbbed almost to bursting.

His bewilderment increased, but he felt that the solution of the mystery was near at hand.

Half an hour passed, then Doctor Kingsford came downstairs, and requested Philip to follow him to the duke's bedchamber. He did so, hoping that no unfavourable change had taken place in the condition of one who had always treated him with the greatest kindness, and given him his first start in life.

He could glean little from the doctor's looks, which were stolid and impassive.

When he reached the duke's room he saw Mrs. Compton, the Reverend Mr. Proctor, and Milly, standing by the bedside.

"Is he here?" asked the duke, in a voice little above a whisper.

"He is, please your grace," answered Doctor Kingsford.

"Let him approach," continued the duke.

Philip took a place by the side of Milly. It might have been accident or design on the part of Doctor Kingsford.

"Put his hand in hers," continued the duke.

Philip made no resistance, and felt Milly clasp his hand tenderly.

Raising himself up in the bed, the duke, who had the death-damp on his brow, exclaimed:

"Philip, there is my widow."

This declaration was a little premature, but his words were soon fulfilled, for the next moment he fell back insensible.

He had made a supreme effort, and it had cost him his life.

For a few moments his stertorous breathing evinced vitality, but soon that gave way to inanimation, and Doctor Kingsford, pulling the sheet over his face, requested the witnesses of the melancholy scene to leave the apartment.

They did so.

Philip still kept his hold upon Milly's hand, and, when they reached the staircase, he said:

"My dear Miss Haines, will you consider it indelicate on my part at such a peculiar time to ask the meaning of the extraordinary scene in which you and I have played so prominent a part?"

"Not at all," she answered, with the faintest suspicion of a smile.

"Do you know the terms of the duke's will?"

"I do."

"I am to marry his widow if I hope to obtain any worldly advantage by his demise."

"Yes."

"Who is his widow?" Philip continued.

"I am the Duchess of Lewes, Mr. Mallison," replied Milly, turning her face away to hide her blushes.

"You, Miss Haines?" cried Philip.

"Yes; we were married half an hour ago, and now you can understand—that is to say, you may please yourself—I—"

"In fact, darling Milly," exclaimed Philip, placing his arm round her waist, "you will be mine. This is a pleasant surprise."

"Hush!" said Milly, solemnly. "We must not talk now. Remember that our dear friend and patron is—"

"I understand you, Milly," replied Philip Mallison. "Forgive my forgetfulness. So much happiness and so much misery seldom come together."

Philip now inquired how her character had been cleared in the duke's eyes.

She informed him that Fred Garron, who had been employed by Lord Cardington to blacken her reputation, had been prompted by the stings of conscience to come to the castle and confess the plot, admitting that he had hired the baby, which he basely said was Milly's, and begging forgiveness for his share in the atrocious transaction.

The rapid succession of the events of the past week had put an end to poor Milly's troubles.

The inquest upon Lord Cardington and Radd the convict disclosed a great scandal in high life, but it was soon forgotten.

The duke and his nephew were buried without any display, and Milly, now Duchess of Lewes, came into the possession of a vast fortune. She had for some time secretly entertained a feeling of affection for Philip, and was no less delighted than himself at the agreeable surprise planned for them by the good-hearted duke in his last moments.

Mrs. Haines in time recovered sufficiently to be discharged from the asylum, and she found to the day of her death a happy home beneath the roof of her daughter, who treated her with the kindness and affection of a dutiful child.

In a few months Milly was married to Philip Mallison, and they took their place in society, which they were so well calculated to adorn.

Fred Garron was forgiven by Milly for his villany, and received a sum of money to enable him to emigrate to the Antipodes, where he led a respectable life and prospered. The early dream of love he had indulged at Chertsey never entirely faded away, and he remained a bachelor all his life for Milly's sake.

Dr. Wadden's affairs became more and more complicated, and, seeing no way out of his embarrassments, he quitted the country with his wife and daughters.

The Duchess of Lewes and Mr. Mallison were extremely popular with all classes, and the life of our heroine glided on as smoothly and happily as it had before been stormy and miserable.

They spent their large fortune in doing good to their fellow creatures, and never was a deserving appeal to their charity met with a refusal.

Thus was the ancient adage that "it is a long lane that has no turning" fully exemplified in the adventurous career of the poor girl whose journey from Chertsey to London had been productive of so many startling changes.

THE END.

THE GYRO PIGEON.—A novel application of the principle of the aerial top has lately been effected by

Mr. Bussay, of the Museum of Firearms at Peckham. This is the gyro pigeon, which is a plate of this steel cut into the shape of a pair of elongated oval discs, connected in the centre, and bent at an angle like the blades of a screw propeller. This is spun from a spindle which is rapidly rotated by the action of a coiled spring enclosed in a metallic box, and released by a cord. The gyro pigeon is sprung into the air and is then fired at. It is good practice for the sportsman, as its flight is rather quicker and sometimes more erratic than that of the real bird. We are afraid, however, that it is too much to hope that the "gyro" will take the place of the birds so unmercifully slaughtered at Hurlingham and elsewhere.

ADA ARGYLE.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SIX months have passed over the head of our hero when we behold him again, but they have fortunately been months of action and labour in his new sphere, which have compelled his attention through many hours of every day, and have kept his mind from brooding perpetually upon its woes.

Yet there was time enough for grief dally and nightly. The memory of his lost hopes came back to him, and in mocking dreams he again clasped the loved Ada in his arms amid the welcome war of elements which had driven her thither, but woke to find his phantom charmer gone and himself alone with his great sorrow.

Still Rashleigh bore up bravely, and believed in a future of peace, when he should look back with a subdued regret upon his present suffering; for he did not cherish his melancholy, or parade it, neither did it make him selfish, morose, or misanthropic.

He was partly relieved, too, strange as it may seem, by other troubles, as one disease supersedes and drives out another in the human system.

His father's creditors had shown no magnanimity in settling with him. He had offered them all, and they had taken it, and old Rupert, once rich and honoured, courted and deferred to, had to look about for the means of earning subsistence for himself and his family.

The world quickly loses its respect for a fallen man, however worthy he may be, or however meekly he may have borne his former honours.

If he has not wealth now, or some equivalent claim upon its notice, he is soon lost among the undistinguished throng, while those who knew him in his "high estate," and who see him now toiling like a modern Sampson at his mill, pass him with no higher sympathy than may be expressed in the remark:

"Poor fellow! He was rich once, but was not wise enough to keep his wealth."

Rupert's fine house and grounds were of course sold with his other real estate, and he rented a cheap cottage in the city, which he furnished with what the law allowed him to retain, and with a few other articles of necessity or comfort, which he bid for and obtained cheaply at the auction sale of his own effects.

What he would have done without Mr. Shelburne's timely present it is difficult to say, but this had enabled him thus to occupy and furnish a home, and his next thought was for earning the means of subsistence.

He was strong and well, but there was nothing offered in the way of business in the quiet little city—city then only in name—and, at the suggestion of his wife, he wrote to his brother-in-law, Mr. Dumont, to inquire whether he could hold out any encouragement for him to come to the capital in quest of employment.

Mrs. Rashleigh hoped that this application might result in their moving to the great city, where they would be near dear Fred, and where they could all live together again.

It would be something to get away from the people who had known them in their prosperity, although there were among these many true friends, whom they would certainly regret to leave.

The answer to this letter was looked forward to with great interest, and the confiding woman imagined her wealthy brother bestirring himself energetically to obtain for Rupert a desirable and lucrative post.

But David Dumont was doing no such thing. He would have disliked nothing more than to have this family of poor relations coming to the city to live, where, if they should be reduced to a state of actual want, he could not ignore their claims upon him for assistance; and that they would come to want he considered in the highest degree probable. Nay, he doubted not that they were already in a state bordering upon destitution. Then Rupert might die—the loss of property had killed many a man—and so he would have the widow and children upon his hands.

David did not look for a place for Mr. Rashleigh,

but wrote to him, utterly disapproving of his coming to the city, where he said the cost of living was high, and all the avenues of business were filled by eager competitors, younger and abler than he.

Nothing could have been more pitiless than his letter, and it added a deeper sense of desolation to the hapless family.

Still the application led to some good results, for it reached the ears of Mr. Shelburne, who had by this time become an active politician, and found his influence augmented by his accession to wealth. For, strange as it may seem to very many people of the present day, the possessor of five thousand pounds was everywhere esteemed a rich man at the time of which we write.

Shelburne prepared a petition for the appointment of Mr. Rashleigh to a post in the Custom House. He procured some influential signatures to it, and obtained letters of introduction for the applicant to several leading political men in the great city.

Armed with these documents Rupert went to the city, hopeful, but not sanguine, and after a couple of months' wearying delay and doubt, succeeded in getting a place, not much better in pecuniary value than that of his son, but which still supported him cheaply, and enabled him to send home monthly about half his earnings to his family.

Frederick, of course, added considerably to these remittances from his own savings, and thus they kept their heads "above water," but without the possibility of making any accumulations, and with no near prospect of an improved position.

Rupert's health deteriorated from his unwonted confinement, and he suffered in humiliation of feelings from the loss of his personal independence and the necessity of receiving the instruction and obeying the orders of men who were his juniors in age and his inferiors in all respects.

He chafed and fretted under these annoyances, and felt at times the stings of poverty almost as keenly as if he had lacked shelter and bread and decent raiment.

Had it not been for the increased privations which such a course must have entailed upon his family he would have infinitely preferred to go forth in the wilderness, axe in hand, and cleave the sturdy forests, so that he might retain that noble sense of independence which belongs to true manhood.

Father and son had a home together in a quarter of the city which had not then been surrendered to its present foreign population, but was as famous for its good boarding-houses as it had been at a still earlier date for the aristocratic mansions which the march of an inexorable fashion has now unpeopled and left to the occupancy of thrifty lessees and a transient population of boarders.

How Rupert and his son lived at this time we may perhaps better understand by being permitted to read a few extracts from a letter written by Frederick to his sister in the winter of 1838.

"Father and I," the letter says, "occupy adjoining rooms, but spend most of our evenings together in his apartment, which is the larger one, and in which we have a fire. We read, write, converse, and play chess a little, and sometimes we pass an evening in the common parlour, where we meet some pleasant and some very odd people—our fellow boarders."

"Father tries hard to be cheerful, but really is not; and who can wonder?"

"He seems to worry chiefly about you and mother, as we boys, he says, can take care of ourselves. Youth and health are in themselves a fortune, which the millionaire of sixty looks upon with envy, and which he would buy back, if he could, with all his possessions."

"A poor young man, he says, if he is supplied with good principles, is not an object of commiseration, but a poor old man is indeed to be pitied."

"We do not see much of Uncle Dumont's family, for they live far up town, in considerable style, and father does not seem to like going there."

"Aunt Sarah is very kind, and urges us to come, but uncle rarely invites us, and is never cordial when we go there."

"He likes to make a display of his wealth before us, and talks altogether about himself and his plans, and does not seem to have any consideration for father's misfortunes."

"His actions seem to say, 'You are down and always will be. That is settled, and it is of no particular consequence, but I—I—am a great man and a rich one, and expect to be greater and richer.'"

"I do not think I am unkindly disposed towards uncle, but I cannot help seeing these things. He is very pompous; but is not father as good as he?"

"I am obliged to him, I am sure, for giving me my situation, but, oh, how I wish I could give it up and go away from him. There seems to be nothing kindly in his nature, and his presence always brings a sort of chill with it."

"Certainly our misfortunes are very great, but

Providence may have some better things in store for us. I cannot believe that my dear mother and sister, who are so good, will always remain in adversity. As for myself I should mourn but little over mere poverty if I had no deeper cause for sadness."

"You know something of my private griefs, but I could not tell you of their intensity if I would, nor is it possible that you should comprehend them. I hear nothing of the A's, but am in daily expectation of receiving her wedding cards."

"How I wish it was over! It seems to me that my mind would be more settled then, but I may be mistaken. I think sometimes that I shall go mad."

"But I do everything I can to avoid thinking of her—and of him, whom I have never seen and hope I never shall see. Pray burn this. You, dear sister, are my only confidante, and I am sorry that I ever added to your troubles by making you a participant in mine. Yet it is a relief to have one friend to whom I can open my whole heart."

CHAPTER XXX.

MR. ARGYLE had not improved in mental health, and about a month after young Rashleigh's interview with him he had been placed in a lunatic asylum, in which he had been induced peaceably to take up his quarters in the belief that it was an hospital where his physical disease would receive more skilful treatment than he could obtain elsewhere.

He did not deny his illness, but he never suspected any hallucination of mind, and his friends were careful not to let him see that they suspected or knew it.

Whether this is judicious treatment in cases of incipient insanity may well be doubted, because a mind naturally strong might have power to recover its lost balance if warned in time of its first slight aberrations from the line of reason and judgment.

But if humoured in all its "thick-coming fancies" it soon gets hopelessly astray and loses the power to distinguish between the realities of life and the figments of its teeming brain.

The physicians of the asylum believed Mr. Argyle to be curable, and predicted his speedy restoration to health. It was a mild case they said, and needed but little treatment beside cessation from care with proper attention to diet and exercise, occupation, and amusement.

He had his office in the institution—his table covered with books and newspapers—and as for work there was his never-ending memorial to Congress and to the Canadian Parliament on the subject of abolishing Lake Erie.

True this was not the kind of occupation which would have been most beneficial for him, but he would not be denied it, and it was deemed best not to thwart him in an employment which gave him so much innocent pleasure.

But in the meanwhile his creditors became alarmed, for he had lands and houses everywhere which he had purchased at high prices when the speculating mania was at its height, and had paid for only in part, having given his bonds and mortgages to secure the balance.

But prices had fallen so alarmingly that these mortgages ceased to be security for the debts, and the holders foreclosed, all making haste to obtain a sale and get "judgment for the residue" against a man whose ruin everybody now predicted.

Had Mr. Argyle remained in sound mind his credit was so good and his resources so many that it is probable he could have stemmed the tide of insolvency which was sweeping over the land, but, as it was, there was little hope for him.

Yet he laughed at the shower of "subpoenas to appear and answer" which reached him in his new retirement, and predicted that his alarmed creditors would soon be ashamed of their folly and their fright.

The processes were handed over to Walsingham, who took the usual steps to secure the law's delay, but who foresaw the ruin which must result to his client from forced sales of his lands at panic prices.

Walsingham, though very fond of money, and himself a large loser by the failures all around him, did not show any desire to break off his engagement with Miss Argyle.

But he made a merit of his fidelity—was lofty in his manner towards her, and seemed desirous that his great magnanimity should be properly appreciated.

Although Mr. Argyle had spoken of him to Frederick Rashleigh as a young man—and perhaps not incorrectly—yet he was in fact about thirty-six years old, and was consequently nearly twice the age of Ada.

He was tall and of good figure; his face was rather handsome, his hair and eyes being coal black, but the latter had more of calculation than of kindness or geniality in their expression.

He dressed well, too well in fact for a business man, and, as in dress so in speech and manner, he was precise, prim, and methodical.

There was nothing gushing about him—no enthusiasm—no possibilities, one would say, of ecstatic joy or deep sorrow.

Ada had believed that she loved this man—she had received his marked addresses and his presents with the knowledge and approval of her parents for many months before she went with her father on their ill-starred journey.

Yet, strange to say, up to that time there had been no positive engagement between them, though her parents and sister had believed that there was and had looked upon the alliance as settled.

But Ada considered herself quite committed on the subject, and, although she was a little mortified at her suitor's slowness in proposing, she had scarce a doubt that he would propose, and she would have felt aggrieved if he had not done so.

After she had met Rashleigh and passed a few days in his society she began to doubt the genuineness of her love for Walsingham, and ere they had together passed through that terrible ordeal which awaited them she had become painfully conscious that her nature possessed capacities for a far deeper affection than any which her staid and formal lover had awakened.

Nor was it altogether with pain that she had made this discovery, for although she believed that by her unqualified encouragement of Walsingham's addresses she was now impliedly engaged to him, and was bound to accept him if he made his offer within a reasonable time, she reflected that he had it still in his power to recede, and might possibly do so.

Perhaps it was such considerations which had prevented her from practising that reserve towards Rashleigh which as a literally engaged lady she might have felt bound to enforce.

Why should she not enjoy this agreeable young man's society when her tardy lover so long delayed to speak the word which would have made her wholly his own?

It was less indeed from a sense of duty to Walsingham than to her younger and more ingenuous admirer that she would have shunned the society of the latter.

But she could not shun it.

She could not repress his admiration nor wholly control her own; a id, although she would have unhesitatingly refused an offer from Rashleigh, she could neither assume that he desired to make one nor treat with coolness her own and her father's friend, who had so fearlessly stood by them in the hour of danger.

The revelation made by Argyle to Frederick had at once changed the position of affairs, and, although he had undesignedly told a little more than the truth in saying that Ada was engaged, his disclosure produced a reserve on the part of the new lover which precluded all chance of farther explanations.

Of his first resentment towards Miss Argyle and his subsequent relentings and hopeless love we have sufficiently spoken.

When Walsingham first heard of the wreck of the "Enterprize" he also heard of the safety of Ada and her father, but he went into no ecstasies, nor did he rush aimlessly to meet them, being quite too systematic in all his actions for any such folly.

He wrote congratulatory letters to them, directed to various places, but he stayed quietly at home, attending to business as usual.

"I should have missed you if I had come," he said, when he met them at home, "and, as the peril had passed, it seemed better to remain at home and attend to business, which was very pressing."

Mr. Argyle assented to this reasoning, though conscious that there was in it something jarring and out of tune with his own ardent nature; but Ada mentally asked herself, "Would Mr. Rashleigh have done so?"

Walsingham's formal proposal and acceptance had followed almost immediately upon the return of the Argyles, and Ada tried hard to persuade herself that she was and ought to be very happy.

Certainly she was an object of envy to many an unchosen belle, and, as she could not but be aware, to her own sister, who had not the tact or good sense to conceal her chagrin.

Ada sincerely regretted her sister's disappointment, but, as she was certain that there had never been the slightest foundation for her hopes, she felt in no way responsible for their downfall.

She had never been able to live on affectionate terms with Arabella since she had passed the age of childhood and had begun to attract the attention of gentlemen, yet she had been innocent and artless, and quite incapable of any unmaidenly forwardness.

Rashleigh's visit had given her some pain, but she had schooled her heart to the duty of closely repressing any tender sentiments toward him, and she even briefly indulged the hope that he might take a fancy to Arabella, whose character she was sure would be improved by a really good husband.

But it did not require any close perception to see that Frederick had no eye or mind for any other charms than those of Ada, and she felt relieved though not happy when his brief visit had ended.

She thought she was assured of Walsingham's love, although there seemed to be no tenderness or fervency in it; yet this she fancied might be owing rather to a lack of demonstrativeness in his manner than to any deficiency of real affection.

She believed that she should find happiness in the path which duty had so clearly pointed out, and she was sure that she had gained what the world called success, and that she would contribute by her prospective alliance to the happiness of her beloved parents.

Before Walsingham had decided to ask the hand of Miss Argyle his choice had wavered between her and a Miss Courtney, a stylish, handsome lady, a few years older than Ada, and who, like her, had the advantage of being an heiress.

He had hesitated long, but had committed himself before he had any reason to doubt the perpetuity of Argyle's great wealth, and before the impaired state of the speculator's intellect was known to or suspected by him.

At the time of his actual engagement to Ada he had reason indeed to expect that her father would suffer some losses, but these he did not believe would be serious; and, as to his mental condition, he only knew that he was at times strangely absent-minded, and seemed to be lost in perplexing thought.

But the suitor was in no way alarmed, and, if he had been, he had already gone too far to recede with honour, so that not only a proposal and acceptance had followed, but the formal consent of the parents had been asked and given.

Four months later, when Mr. Argyle had become an inmate of the asylum and the fabric of his great fortune seemed tottering to its fall, Walsingham really regretted what he regarded as his precipitancy, and looked upon his engagement as a misfortune.

He did not, as we have said, directly exhibit this feeling to Ada—a high sense of honour forbade such a course—but he played the patron toward her, and indeed toward the whole of her family.

If he had been calm and passionless before he was grand and stately now, and at times even dictatorial toward the timid girl, who tried daily to charm him into some little show of tenderness, but her efforts were made in vain.

The satirical Arabella called him his High Mightiness, and asked her envious sister what treatment she expected after marriage from a man who assumed to control her actions before the nuptial knot was tied.

It was very hard for Ada to bear the apathy of her lover and the taunts of her sister without a sympathizing friend to whom she could disclose her trials.

As to her rotund and robust but not romantic mother, she saw nothing but grandeur and bliss in the prospective alliance, and she lost no opportunity of showing her profound regard for her future son-in-law, or of impressing upon her daughter's mind the importance of pleasing him in all things.

Ada did not lack spirit, and although she usually kept both her pride and anger in subjection to a sense of duty she could not always control these turbulent passions, and she daily feared that she should spoil her "brilliant fortunes" by some exhibition of them, for she was sure if they once overleaped restraint they would be violent in proportion to their long repression.

We say that she feared this, for from childhood she had had instilled into her mind the necessity of making a good match; and, as to Mr. Rashleigh, if she allowed herself to retain any tender thoughts of him, she was sure that she would never be permitted to marry so poor a man, even if he should desire it, which she thought most improbable. Young gentlemen are not usually inclined to attach themselves again to their former sweethearts after they have been engaged to and quarrelled with other men.

No; Rashleigh was to her as if he had never been, excepting for some vain regrets which were dutifully hushed, and some pleasant dreams in which she again listened to his musical voice and felt the pressure of his sustaining arm amid some indefinable dangers, vague and wild, but not altogether unwelcome, since they were shared by him.

She felt somewhat guilty even for entertaining these unbidden visions—but who is accountable for the fantastic freaks of an imagination disenthralled from the control of reason?

Mrs. Argyle was not a woman of fact. In her anxiety to keep up Ada's flagging affection for Walsingham she sounded his praises too often and dwelt too much upon his honour and generosity in keeping faith with her in her adversity.

"Is it any more than his duty?" asked the daughter.

"No; but it is more than many men would do."

"Are we then poor, mother? Is father insolvent?"

"No, not yet; but he is in great danger of insolvency, and has lost enormously by the fall of real estate. So Mr. Walsingham says."

"Walsingham? Is he the man to tell us of this?"

"How foolishly you talk, Ada. He is your father's lawyer, is he not? It is his business to tell us."

"Not unasked, I should think. True generosity ought to seal his lips on such a subject and at such a time."

"Nonsense, Ada. You are too sensitive."

"No, mother; I can see Walsingham's good qualities, but I cannot see why he or you should make a merit of his fidelity to me. Real affection is independent of the vicissitudes of life, and the truest love should brighten in the hour of adversity. I have read even of noble-hearted men who rejoiced to find the objects of their affection in poverty so that they could have the bliss of raising them to affluence and ease."

"Fiddlesticks!" said Mrs. Argyle.

CHAPTER XXXI.

SOME bright days in February gave promise of the coming spring and awakened longings for liberty in many a slave of the desk, and especially in the breast of Rupert Rashleigh, who was unused to the restraint of an office life, and could not, at his age, easily form new habits.

That his health and spirits had failed was too evident to Frederick, who vainly sought to charm him back to the cheerful and hopeful air with which he had entered upon his new duties.

Always failing in these efforts—seeing his father almost constantly depressed though uncomplaining, Frederick's more elastic spirits also sank, and he lost again the little ground which he had gained in fighting for forgetfulness of his private griefs.

There were other causes why these tender regrets should now come back to him with new force and poignancy, for the season had arrived when, according to Tom Argyle's statement, Ada's nuptials were to be celebrated, and he was in daily expectation of receiving her wedding cards.

He was in this despondent mood when one afternoon, as he was about leaving the bank, the postman brought him a thick letter from his sister, which he put into his pocket, desirous to enjoy it fully in his quiet quarters at home.

He found his father there, and, announcing the welcome missive, he opened it, and to his surprise discovered that it contained another letter directed to him, which had been enclosed and forwarded to him by his sister.

"What can this mean?" he asked, glancing at the postmark; "in a lady's hand, too. Surely I have no correspondents residing here."

"Would it not be well to open it?" said his father, as Fred continued to examine the superscription with a puzzled look. "Tony Lumpkin says the cream of the correspondence is generally in the inside."

"So it is! Tony was right. Let's see. Why what is this? Catharine—Catharine Blenheim! Ah, yes—oh, yes—the lady of the wreck."

"What; she whose son you rescued?"

"The same. Let's see. Ah, yes—poor Frank is dead. That is as I expected."

The letter filled several pages, and Frederick rapidly perused it, giving his father a sort of synopsis of its contents as he went along.

"She persevered and went on with her journey after the accident, having first procured a new outfit and new servant. You see," added Fred, explaining, "she had an Irish man-servant with her, a faithful enough fellow as she described him, but not equal to the heroism of sacrificing himself for her son. He drew a favourable lot and left the wreck in one of the boats; though not without many awkward apologies."

"She would not take him again I suppose?"

"Probably they did not meet. I do not think she entertained any resentment towards him."

"Well, did her son die before he reached their home?"

"No—it seems not. His case became hopeless and she returned with him in November—her own health also having become very much impaired. I do not wonder after her exposure in the water and her fright, and all her anxieties."

"When did the young man die?"

"I do not understand exactly when. This letter is dated December 20th. It was probably not long before that. She says that the necessity of giving her constant attention to him together with her own illness and her grief has prevented her from writing to me before, as she has long intended to do. Let us see! What is this? She wants me to come and see her."

Frederick perused first in silence and then aloud to his father the closing part of the epistle, which was as follows:

"Now, my dear young friend, after the immeasurable obligations under which you have placed me—after you have saved my dear boy from a watery grave to die peacefully in my arms at home—and, oh, with such often-repeated expression of love and gratitude to you—can you wonder when I say that there is no one in the world but you who can now fill his place in my heart? I am sure you are everything that is good and noble. Come to me if it is possible without delay, for I have many things to say to you and some of an important nature which I can only allude to in a letter like this which ought to be sacred to grief and friendship."

"Let it suffice to say, my excellent friend, that you can have no aim of interest in life which shall not be as dear to me as to yourself, and that your lot must be exalted indeed if I do not find the means to add to its joys or detract from its pains. Come to me!"

"P-h-e-w!" whistled old Rupert. "What does all that mean? That's gratitude of a high order, Fred. But you deserve it, my dear boy, you deserve it."

"I do not quite see it," replied the young man, laughingly. "But a mother is a mother the world over."

"You will go and see her?"

"Oh, of course. I should have done that without invitation if I had known she resided here in the city."

"What can she mean by having something important to say to you?"

"I have not the least idea."

"Is she rich?"

"I am sure I do not know. I hope she is not going to offer me money."

"Probably not. Yet she may intend to give you some valuable present as a memento of her son. She would hardly urge you so earnestly to visit her without some such object in view."

"It may be so, but I am sure she would do nothing to wound one's feelings, for she seemed to be a perfect lady."

"She has given you her address?"

"Oh, yes. I will go to-morrow immediately after bank hours."

On the next afternoon Frederick rode up town, and a little after four o'clock found himself in front of a very handsome house, bearing the name of Blenheim on its door-plate.

It was one of a row of four-storey, stone-front buildings, such as only the richer classes occupy, and its interior, when he was admitted to it, gave additional evidence that it was indeed the abode of wealth and luxury.

The large parlours were filled with the costliest furniture; beautiful paintings adorned the walls; a hundred little articles of *verru* were scattered about on tables and mantels, and the tall windows were draped with curtains of lace and damask.

Frederick had inquired for Mrs. Blenheim, and had given his card to the servant who admitted him, and the man returned in a few minutes to say that Miss Winslow would be down to see him directly.

Who Miss Winslow was he had little time to conjecture before a sprightly young lady—rather too sprightly indeed for her sable dress—came into the room, shook hands cordially with him, and introduced herself as Alice Winslow, a niece of Mrs. Blenheim. "Aunt is too ill to see you to-day," she said, "though she has been looking anxiously for you for many days. I know all about you. I am to play the hostess for her as well as I can until she is able to see you, which she hopes to do to-morrow."

"To-morrow. I will then call again—"

"Not at all! We have your room ready here. It has been waiting for you a whole week. One of the servants will go for your baggage, and you must make this your home while you remain in the city. These are aunt's arrangements."

"She is very kind. But she has made a mistake in supposing that I am just off a journey, whereas I am residing in this city. I received her letter only yesterday, it having been forwarded to me here."

Miss Winslow pondered this intelligence for a moment and then said, smiling brightly:

"Then you must wait here while I tell this to aunt, and get her orders. I would not have her disappointed or thwarted in her present feeble state on any account."

"Certainly not," added Rashleigh. "I will do all that I can to gratify her."

The young lady left the room, and was absent for a full quarter of an hour, and when she returned her demeanour was much more sober, and her eyes were red with weeping.

"Mrs. Blenheim is very much agitated," she said, "and—and does not think she has long to live. She has had these low, nervous turns at times ever since poor Frank's death."

"Has she any ascertained disease?" Rashleigh asked.

"Yes, a disease of the heart, but her physicians cannot say whether it is organic or—only—only—I forget the term."

"Functional?" suggested Fred.

"Yes—that's the word. I don't know what it means, but in one case it is very serious and in the other not. Aunt is sure of the worst at times, and she has desired me at once to explain to you some things that—that she is impatient to have you know."

Greatly wondering at this preamble, Rashleigh bowed and remained listening.

"Mrs. Blenheim, as I suppose you know, is a widow and is wealthy. She has a large property in her own right, and Cousin Frank had a separate fortune which would have been his at the age of twenty-one. Having died in his minority, his estate goes to his mother, either by law or by her late husband's will. I do not know exactly which, but it is no matter. It is hers."

Fred again bowed and said that he was happy to hear that Mrs. Blenheim was so well provided for.

"Yes," continued the young lady, smiling; "but I see you do not yet guess at my message or at your good fortune, for this property of poor Frank's she has resolved shall be yours."

"Mine!" exclaimed Fred, in unfeigned astonishment. "Surely, Miss Winslow, I do not understand you aright."

"It is all to be yours. To-morrow she will talk to you about it herself—if she is able—but she wishes you to know it to-day. She says that she owes her own life and her son's life under Providence, to you, and that nothing which she can bestow upon you can acquit her of a thousandth part of her obligations."

Rashleigh was too much affected to reply at once, but when he found the power of utterance he said:

"I did not need this proof to convince me that Mrs. Blenheim was a woman of noble heart, for her heroic conduct in resolving, against every solicitation, to stay and die with her son was sufficient evidence of that. But how can I receive from her this munificent remuneration for a simple act of humanity? If it is discreditable to accept a small sum for such a service—and such is the opinion of the world—is the dishonour lessened by increasing the reward?"

"I do not understand these things," replied the young lady, smiling. "All I know is that aunt is not to be contradicted or opposed, and that she has set her heart on this. You must not call it by such names as reward or remuneration, but consider it only as a token of her regard. I hope to report you as very thankful."

"Very thankful you may certainly report me for such a noble offer, and, as to the rest, perhaps to-morrow I can better tell in what way I ought to respond to it."

"No—no—no; surely you will not grieve my dear aunt by such a reception of her magnanimous offer. She has counted so much on making you happy. But perhaps you are already so rich that you can afford to slight the offered gifts of fortune?"

"Not so—not so! I am a poor man, although educated with the tastes and habits of a rich one. My father, as late as last spring, was the possessor of vast wealth, all of which has been swept away by the commercial disasters of the past summer."

Miss Winslow's eyes sparkled as these words were spoken; a bright smile illumined her features, and she clasped her hands as she replied, impulsively:

"Oh, I am so glad to hear it! Aunt will be so pleased to know that Frank's fortune will be really a great benefit to you. Pray let me tell her all; and that you accept her benefaction in the spirit in which it is offered, and with thanks."

"With boundless thanks!" replied Rashleigh, who had suddenly come to the conclusion that he had been playing a romantic part in hesitating to accept this gift, and one not consonant with good sense or good feeling.

Doubtless the memory which he had conjured up of his ruined father, now tottering by the side of beardless clerks for a living, had something to do with his sudden change of mind; for surely he thought there was no pleasure left for him on earth so great, or which he would value so highly, as the power of restoring his impoverished parents and sister to their former state of independence and ease.

"Yes," he added; "I have been mistaken. Do not let Mrs. Blenheim know that I have hesitated, but tell her that I will call to-morrow to express my acknowledgments—my gratitude. Tell her that I have not deserved her bounty, but that I will try in the future to show my appreciation of her goodness, and, as far as possible, to supply to her the place of her lost son."

"Yes—yes, Mr. Rashleigh," said Miss Winslow, with starting tears; "now you echo her fondest wishes. Oh, if you could but live with her, and be another Frank to her, she thinks that her life might

yet be happy, and she would find her joy in promoting yours. Think! Upon whom could the torn tendrils of her heart close so fondly as upon the friend and benefactor of the dear son whom she has lost? But I have done wrong! I was not to speak of this—at least, not now."

"I perceive the delicacy of your aunt's conduct. She will not hamper me with conditions; but having first rendered me independent she would leave all else to affection and a sense of duty. Well, be it so. It shall be my part to see that she is not disappointed in her estimate of my character."

"You do not ask the size of this golden fleece which Fortune has thrown in your way," said the lady, smiling.

"No," replied Fred; "I am not eager to hear. In due time I shall doubtless learn from the lips of my benefactress herself."

"Yes, perhaps it is better that she should tell you; but in the meantime you need not doubt that it will be sufficient to render you independent. I was charged by my aunt with another extraordinary message to you, but I think you can afford to wait for that also until to-morrow—then receive it directly from her."

Miss Winslow had hesitated and slightly blushed as she uttered the last sentence, and then, after vainly trying to avoid it, she gave way to a ringing, girlish laugh.

"An extraordinary message! Pray let me hear it now," Rashleigh replied. "I am sure it can be nothing unpleasant."

"It is not. I have no doubt you will find it very agreeable; but it was preposterous to send such a message by me. I do not know what I was thinking of to promise her I would deliver it. I quite overestimated my assurance, which is not usually very deficient."

"You have wrought my curiosity up to the highest point," returned Fred, feeling some uneasiness at the turn which the conversation had taken. "Surely you will not be so cruel as to leave it ungratified for a whole day."

"Perhaps I ought not, as your comfort and safety seem to be the first objects of aunt's consideration."

"My safety?" asked Fred, in amazement. "The words are hers," returned Miss Winslow, again colouring and laughing. "But I will tell you, if you will promise not to think me very vain and foolish."

"I can freely promise that."

"Well then—it is simply this—but—but—it is very silly you know."

Rashleigh laughed heartily now and said:

"Well—well—admit that for the present, and now—what is it? I am quite in torture."

"It is just this. Mrs. Blenheim is good enough and partial enough to me to think that I am very—very attractive, which is absurd of course—"

"I do not see that—"

"She insisted," continued the lady, now speaking very rapidly, "that I should tell you—for her—for her you know. This warning is not from me."

"Yes."

"That—that—in short that you are not to fall in love with me—because I am engaged! There—now it is out! And if I had said it at once without any preamble I am sure it would not have been half so ridiculous."

Both parties were laughing by this time too heartily for a house of mourning—but they were alone in the great parlours—and Fred, mindful of his politeness, replied to the still-blushing girl:

"Your aunt has done me a real kindness in warning me against so very evident a peril—"

"Oh—of course. You are quite welcome to compliment me now. I rather like it—since it can do no harm to either of us—and will keep you in practice."

"Like target-shooting I suppose, it can bring nothing down. Still our rifle companies like it—but I have noticed that they are always particular to have a beautiful target."

"Again! Oh, you'll be delightful company. I hope you'll teach my Fred how to say these sugared things. He has been wonderfully deficient ever since—since he no longer thought it necessary, I suppose."

After a little more light talk Rashleigh took his leave, having first agreed upon the hour of his call the next day.

CHAPTER XXXII.

It was wonderful news. He could scarcely believe that it was true, and it was a relief to him to be alone in the street where he could walk off something of his excitement and obtain a more sober view of his situation.

How large was this fortune which had been in so extraordinary a manner thrust upon him?

Would it enable him to restore his parents to their

old home and their former mode of life? What was he expected to do in return for it?

For, although it was to be given to him unconditionally, that would by no means absolve him from obligations to the donor, whose happiness he should feel always bound to consult.

Yet this would ever be a pleasure to him, and he was sure that she who stood ready to manifest her love and gratitude in so magnificent a manner would never prove exacting or in any way require him to surrender his personal independence.

Occupied with these thoughts, and with his new hopes and plans, he walked all the long way to his home, for he felt the need of violent exercise to keep down his excitement.

It was after dark and after the tea hour when he arrived at his lodgings and found his father anxiously awaiting his return.

He told him all hurriedly, rapidly, feeling that he could not too soon administer the medicine of hope to so disheartened and dejected a man, and Rupert's spirits responded quickly to the cheerful tidings.

Yet he cautioned Frederick not to allow his expectations to rise too high.

"People have such different notions of what constitutes a fortune," he said; "but still if it should be no more than a thousand or two it will be a great deal for you."

"For you, father—not for me," responded the son. "I'll have none of it if it is not more than that. I can make my way."

"No, no, Fred. I would never consent to that."

"I'll manage it without your consent then, father."

It shall at least be used to get you into some better business more suitable to your tastes and years, and where perhaps your energy and business tact may again make a fortune for us all."

"Well, well, we'll see, Fred—we'll see. We won't count chickens yet though. But it's a delightful prospect—the thought of getting away from that confounded Custom House."

"So it is—so it is, delightful. I do so long to see you out of it. I dream of it at night. I really dreamed the other night that I was in there and saw you standing at your desk chained by the leg. I did."

"Ah, Fred! Fred! what a son you are!" exclaimed Rupert, grasping his hand, but unable for some moments to say more.

"But it's true!" he added, after a pause. "Metaphorically true. The galling chain is there, although invisible. But you have not had your supper, and I fear it is too late now."

"No matter—we will go out by-and-by and get some oysters and coffee. We need not be so economical now."

So they did. Over the unusual treat which they had allowed themselves they discussed anew their prospects and their plans, and the joyous surprise which the father's unexpected return home would give to his family.

"You shall take them the news in person," said the son. "I will not write until you go."

Frederick was of course punctual in keeping his appointment the next afternoon, and it was in no diminished state of excitement that he once more rang the bell at the door of Mrs. Blenheim's house and awaited admission.

But how was he startled when the servant who led him in told him, in answer to his inquiries for the ladies, that Mrs. Blenheim was very ill—dangerously so, he believed—but that he would take up his card to Miss Winslow.

Pained and alarmed at this intelligence, Rashleigh entered the parlour and waited many minutes for the young lady, whose steps at one time he thought he heard upon the staircase; then her name, he was sure, was called by some harsh voice:

"Alice! Alice!"

Soon he heard a heavier step on the stairs and in the hall; the door opened, and a tall, straight, over-dressed man entered, whom, at first glance, Fred thought to be young, then middle-aged, then old and wrinkled, as he certainly was, though his black wig and dyed moustache and his chais and rings and juvenile dress made him a hideous caricature of youth. He had Fred's card in one hand, and he extended the other cordially to the visitor as he entered, saying:

"This is Mr. Frederick Rashleigh! I am charmed to meet you, sir, but you have come to the house of mourning. My poor sister is lying very low, and we have but little hope of her recovery. Pray be seated."

Rashleigh expressed his unfeigned sorrow, asked a few questions about the suffering lady, and then inquired if he should have the pleasure of seeing Miss Winslow.

"Miss Winslow? No, sir; I fear not," was the quick reply. "She is in constant attendance upon her aunt, where she is needed every minute. She is my daughter, sir."

Frederick bowed, with a look which seemed to say that he did not think it much to her credit, and that he was sorry for it.

Perhaps the look was understood, for the young-old man's cordial manner slightly changed, although he did not lose his politeness.

"You saw Miss Winslow yesterday, I believe," he said.

"Yes, sir; I had that pleasure."

"I am sure the pleasure was mutual, sir, but I hope you will excuse me when I say that I have reason to fear that that interview led to some little misunderstanding on your part."

Fred's hopes, which had been falling ever since he entered the room, now went down with rapidity.

He did not reply, and the old youth continued, after a pause, as follows:

"I have reason to fear that she awakened some expectations in your mind which can never be fulfilled. The fact is, sir, that my sister's manifold afflictions—I impart this information to you in confidence—have somewhat impaired her mind. The terrible scenes through which she passed on the wreck and in the water—where you, my dear sir, so chivalrously rescued her—were enough, you know, to unsettle a stronger intellect."

Frederick listened, without other reply than a bow of assent, for, unprepossessing as was the speaker, and painful as were his tidings, something like a conviction of their truth fastened itself upon his mind.

This, then, was the secret of that extraordinary generosity which he had found it so difficult to believe, and this was to be the end of his phantom fortune.

His mind had just started the question how it was that Alice Winslow knew nothing of all this when his companion resumed speaking.

"Her unfortunate position in this respect," he said, "has been comprehended by her physicians and by myself, but we have kept it as far as possible from dear Alice, who is tenderly attached to her aunt, and sees nothing in her case more than that occasional faintness which so often accompanies extreme debility. She has been with her only a few weeks, having recently returned from school. We who have watched her longer better understand her hallucination. As her brother, and her only brother, you will understand that my solicitude on this subject would naturally be extreme."

"Of course," replied Rashleigh.

"Her desire to reward you is certainly most commendable, and, confined within reasonable limits, such as the bestowal of some costly and valuable present, would meet the fullest approval of her friends. Whether she recovers or not I may confidently promise you this; but, as to a fortune, of course you must see that that is quite preposterous."

"I seek no reward, sir, small or great, for an act of humanity," exclaimed Fred, now rising and taking his hat. "I am here at the request of Mrs. Blenheim and your daughter. Do I understand you that I can see neither of them?"

"Neither of them."

"Does Miss Winslow know that I am in the house?"

"She does, sir."

"And her aunt does not, I presume?"

"Her aunt does not, sir. She is in a—comatose state, sir, and if she were not her physicians would not allow us to communicate any exciting intelligence to her—certainly nothing that would so forcibly recall to her the scenes of the wreck."

"I will bid you good afternoon then, sir," said Frederick.

Mr. Winslow, who had talked rapidly, and had seemed for some time impatient to get rid of his visitor, extended his hand quickly and said:

"Must you go? Good-bye then, my dear sir. Here is my card with my office address. Any future inquiries that you may desire to make in regard to Mrs. Blenheim's health you will please to make there, as we are obliged to keep the house very quiet, and after to-day the bell will not ring. Good-bye, I am most happy to have met you."

Sad, disgusted, and weary of this man's polite chatter and false compliments, Frederick went forth and heard the great hall door close behind him.

But mingling with the sound, or instantly following it, was that of a raised window in the second storey, from which a delicate arm and hand protruded for a moment, and then a white billet fluttered down like a snow-flake and fell at his feet.

He picked it up, and again looked upward, but the window was closed and no one was visible near it.

(To be continued.)

THE death is announced of a Mrs. Sarah Bowen, at Haverfordwest, who had, it is stated, attained the age of nearly 102 years. Mrs. Bowen was born in the ninth year of the reign of King George III. during

the shrievalty of Thomas Skryme, of Vaynor. The deceased lady lived under the reigns of no less than four English monarchs.

MYSTERY OF THE HAUNTED GRANGE.

CHAPTER LI.

THE inquest began on the morrow. The news had spread already; an immense crowd had gathered. A celebrated author, the brother of a peer, was to be tried for the murder of a village girl. The sensation was immense.

William Saunders, the seaman, was the first witness called; and he told his story to the coroner and his jury with a quiet simplicity and straightforwardness that no cross-questioning could shake.

He swore positively to the day and the hour—to the very moment almost—at which the deed had been done; and testified to his return with Mr. Lisle and the detective officer, and the finding of the remains.

The second witness was Robert Lisle, who narrated his arrival, four days before the sailor, at his residence in Speckhaven—their visit to London and to Inspector Burnham the next day—their going together to Battersea and finding the skull and bones in the cave. Those remains being present were exhibited, and, having been identified by him, Mr. Lisle stood down.

Messrs. Burnham and Timmins were next called upon; they gave their official evidence and also identified the remains found at Battersea.

The next witness—and at the sound of his name a buzz of expectation and interest ran through the court—was Mathew Warren.

The crowd leaned forward to look at him with eager interest.

Hale and upright, white haired and stern, the old bailiff advanced and took his place.

Alice Warren was his daughter—his only daughter; she was twenty years and seven months old when she left her home. It would be six years on the twenty-seventh of September next since he had seen her last. On the evening of the twenty-seventh, without a word of warning or farewell, she had left her home, and had never written or returned since. He had made no inquiries about her—had never tried to find her—would have discarded her had she attempted to return. Suitors? Yes, she had had many suitors—more than he liked, Flighty, loose in her ways? No, not that he had ever noticed or heard; she was generally thought a sensible girl rather than otherwise. Yes, she had lovers in her own class of life—she was as good as engaged to Peter Jenkins of the Mill, not out and out, but they had been keeping company for four years. Gentlemen? Well, yes, there had been gentlemen, too; all the gentlemen stopping at the Priory that year used to visit his cottage, except one. Who was the exception? Why, Mr. Allan Fane, of course, who was a married man, and had no business running after young women. The rest were all unmarried. Yes, he knew their names; knew them all. They were Lord Montalien, his brother (Mr. Guy Earlscount), Captain Villiers, and Sir Harry Gordon of the Guards, and a Mr. Augustus Stedman.

How often did these gentlemen visit his house? Well, he couldn't say for certain; his business kept him absent from home during the best part of the day, and he would not have allowed their visits in the evening. His family always retired and the house was locked for the night at nine o'clock. He had seen them all at the cottage talking to his daughter at different times; couldn't say which came most often; they never stayed long at a time. Yes; Mr. Guy had been there six times or more. Fifty times? Couldn't affirm the number of times. Not so often as that? No, not so often as that. No; not more often than the others. Sometimes he came alone, sometimes with the two officers. The rest came alone or together, as they chose.

It was the only year that gentlemen had been down at the Priory, but both Lord Montalien and Mr. Earlscount visited his family whenever there. Alice seemed to like them both; she talked most of Mr. Guy, he thought. She had dark brown hair, braided generally behind. (Hair shown.) Yes; her hair looked like that, only darker and more glossy; that looked faded and dirty. Didn't remember the clothes she wore. The lock? Yes; she wore a lock round her neck, given her by Miss Paulina Lisle before going to France. It contained Miss Lisle's picture and hair, and "From Paulina to Alice" engraved on the case. Yes; that was the lock. Couldn't swear positively to it.

During his evidence Mathew Warren's rugged old face had kept its set sternness, not a tremor of the voice betokening that it was of his own child he spoke. He stood down, and Mrs. Warren was called to take his place.

She came, trembling and weeping. The heart of every one present was moved at the sight of the mother of the murdered girl. The coroner was very gentle and kindly in his inquiries. Alice Warren was her daughter. She confirmed her husband's account of her flight and the date.

She had known all the gentlemen stopping at the Priory that year—Mr. Allan Fane was the only one among them who did not visit their cottage. For the others, some of them dropped in every day—for a drink of milk, for a rest out of the sun. No, she could not tell which came most often. They all came about alike. Mr. Guy came no more frequently than the others, not so often as Mr. Stedman and Lord Montalien, she thought, though she wouldn't swear to it. Sometimes he came alone, sometimes with Captain Villiers and Gordon. Mr. Stedman always came alone; so did Lord Montalien. None of them ever stayed long, none of them ever made love to her daughter that she heard.

She and Mr. Guy used to talk of Miss Lisle mostly, then in France, and Alice used to show him all Paulina's letters. She never evinced any preference for the society of any one above another, except maybe Mr. Stedman, whom she did not like. Had heard her say she did not like him, and used to hide upstairs occasionally when he came. Never hid from any of the others. Might have had a secret preference—used to think so, but could not tell for which. Was absent sometimes taking walks, thought it might be with some of the gentlemen, but couldn't tell for certain. Had asked Alice, but her daughter only laughed and had told her nothing. Had remarked the night previous to her flight that she had returned later than usual from walking—noticed something odd in her manner all next day. Had seen her when she left home in the evening—thought she was going to Speckhaven for something, as she often went, and had taken no notice. Alice had kissed her before she left.

The witness here became so agitated that it was some time before she could go on. Knew what she wore very well—it was a dark brown merino dress, a white-and-blue shawl, a black straw hat, trimmed with a blue ribbon, and a black lace veil. She had a bag in her hand, and believed she must have taken in that bag a second dress, a blue-and-white plaid, her Sunday best. Would know the latter again if she saw it. (Pieces of dress shown.) Yes (greatly agitated), this was the same, faded and dirty, but the same pattern and material. (Fragments of shawl produced, and identified immediately. Hair shown.) That was the colour of her daughter's hair, but brighter, and that was its length and the way she wore it braided. (Identified the lock.) The note to Miss Lisle was shown. Yes, that was her daughter's handwriting. Were there any distinguishing marks about her daughter's teeth? She was asked by the coroner. Yes; Alice had very nice white teeth, but one of the front ones slightly overlapped and was longer than the other, and the eye-tooth on the right side had been extracted. (The skull was covered with a cloth, and the teeth exhibited.) Yes, those were like Alice's—there was the overlapping front tooth, there the place whence the eye-tooth had been extracted.

Mrs. Warren began to weep so wildly that she was permitted to stand down.

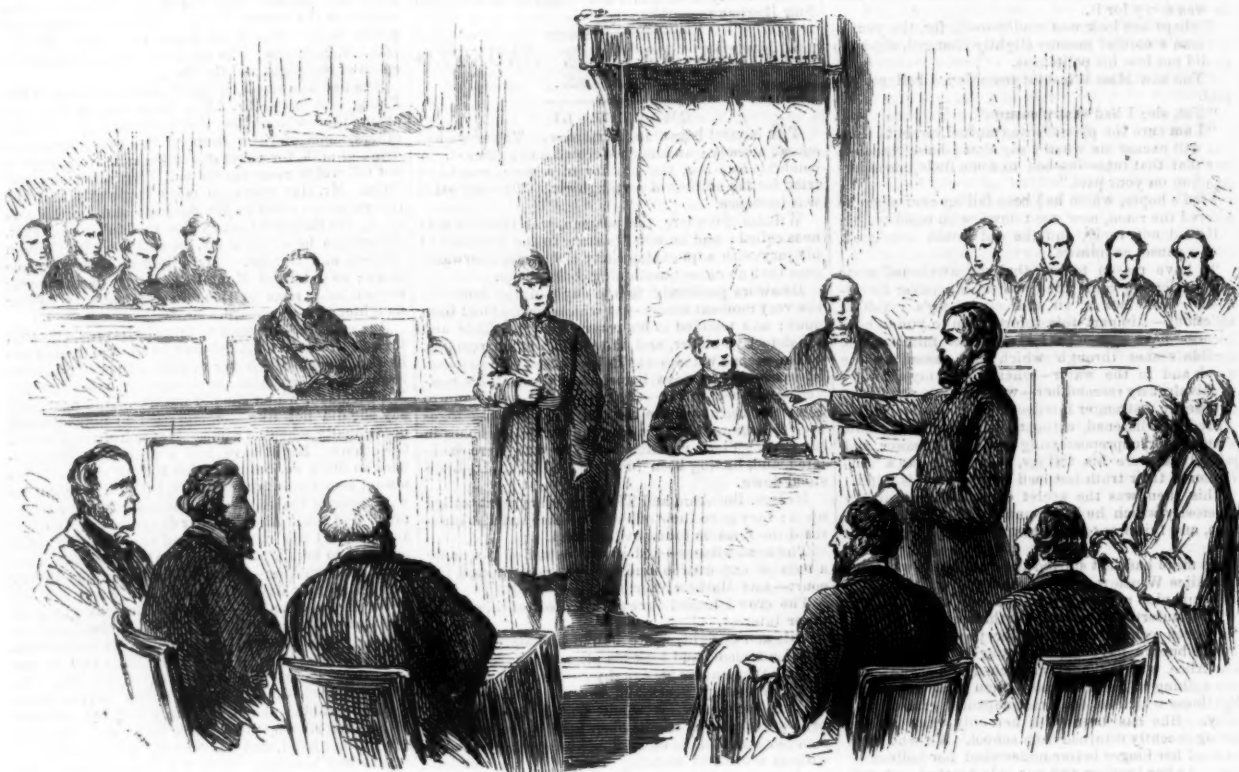
John Smith was next called. John Smith was a railway official—a guard. On the evening of the 27th of September—he remembered it very well, from the talk afterwards about the young woman's flight—the only London passengers from Speckhaven had been Mr. Guy Earlscount (the prisoner), and a young woman, who wore a veil over her face. When he saw them first they were talking together on the platform. Had told Mr. Guy to look sharp, or words to that effect, as the train was about to start, and had heard him distinctly remark to the woman, "This way, Alice." They had then entered a first-class carriage together. Knowing Mr. Guy, was curious about the woman, and watched them when the train reached London. It was about eleven at night then. They had got into a cab and were driven away at once together.

Mrs. Martha Howe was the next to enter the witness-box, violently agitated and in tears.

Mrs. Howe was greatly inclined to irrelevant matter, and was kept with difficulty to the point. Condensed, her evidence told dead against the prisoner.

A gentleman, whose name Mrs. Howe did not know—a tall, fair, genteel young man—had called early on the morning of September 27th, and engaged the two best rooms—which parlour and bedroom they were—for a party from the country, coming up that night. Remembered the date because she always kept account of the days she let her lodgings.

The party was a lady, he told her, coming up to be married—a runaway match. About twelve o'clock that night a lady and gentleman drove up in a cab, and the gentleman asked if a lady from the country wasn't expected.



[THE INQUEST.]

They came in. The lady wore a dark brown merino dress, a blue-and-white shawl, a black hat and veil. She was middle-sized, plump, and very pretty, with rosy cheeks, blue eyes, dark brown hair, and about twenty years old.

The gentleman was the prisoner—could swear to it—knew him the minute she set eyes upon him; he stayed for only a few minutes, ran downstairs, then ran back, as if to say something more. Didn't hear what was said.

Thinks she asked the young woman if that was the gentleman she was going to marry, but knows she wasn't told.

Fair young man called next morning. Next evening at six o'clock a cab drove up, and some one entered the house. Ran up from the kitchen in time to see a man handing her lodger into the cab, but no more. Didn't see his face.

Gentleman came back with her, and remained in the house until next day, but she never saw him. Every day for two weeks he came every evening, remaining until the following day, but always coming so late and departing so early that she didn't see him. He had a latch-key, and let himself in.

Her lodger called herself Mrs. Brown. She told her that her husband was a gentleman, and that she had run away from home. She wore a wedding-ring, and had a locket and a chain round her neck. Yes, that was the locket. She had but two dresses, the brown merino and a blue-and-white plaid—very nice. She never got any new things while at her house. Yes, this hair looked like Mrs. Brown's. Had noticed the irregularity of the teeth—those shown were precisely like hers.

After the first fortnight Mrs. Brown's husband's visits grew less and less frequent—he was absent for days together; when he did come he never remained more than an hour or two. Mrs. Brown began to grow pale and thin, and witness had often caught her crying. On two or three occasions she had caught sight of Mr. Brown, but he always had his face muffled up, and his hat pulled over his eyes, so that she had never got a good look at him. He always came about dusk. It might be the same she saw the first night or it might not. The height and shape were alike. She wouldn't swear either way. Seldom heard him speak.

On one occasion, some time in November, she thought, on her return from market one afternoon, her servant, Sarah Ann, had informed her that a tall, dark, military gent had been there to see Mrs. Brown, and had left her a bunch of roses. He stayed about an hour. The next afternoon, just at dark, Mr. Brown came. He and Mrs. Brown had a quarrel

on that occasion—Mrs. Brown had cried, and he had scolded. Had not listened—had not heard anything that passed. Mr. Brown came out after half an hour, called her to him in the passage, paid the bill, and told her Mrs. Brown was going to leave on the next day. He was muffled up as usual, and the passage was so dark that she could not have recognized a feature had he been unmuffled. A cab had come and Mrs. Brown had gone next morning. She cried when she left, and looked very pale and unhappy. She had never seen her or Mr. Brown from that day to this.

Ellen Young was next called. Ellen Young was about twenty-three years of age, and gave her evidence clearly and intelligently. She was the daughter of Mrs. Sarah Young, lodging-house keeper, of the Strand. Her mother was very ill—dying, she thought, and quite unable to give evidence.

About six years ago, come next November, a man had called at her house, and taken lodgings for a lady, a Mrs. Brown. "I did not see him myself, either then or at any other time, except once, and should not know him again. Mother came down to the kitchen and told me about it; she said he looked like a gentleman—did not describe him.

"Mrs. Brown came next day—didn't remember what she wore—a dark dress, I think. She was pale and sickly looking, but pretty. She came alone. The gentleman came again next day—mother told me when I came home from school that another lodger had died that afternoon, and that Mrs. Brown's gentleman stayed with him, and had written down a confession he had made.

"I don't think he came any more until near Christmas—if he had mother would have told me.

"I saw Mrs. Brown often during that time. She seemed very miserable—had trouble on her mind, and cried nearly all the time. No one ever came to see her, and she hardly ever stirred out.

"One evening—it was Christmas week I know—I saw her dress herself and go out. It was near dark, and snowing hard. Two hours after she came home in a cab in a sort of faint or fit.

"The cabman had to carry her upstairs and lay her on the bed. He told mother and me that a man had stopped him in St. James's Street, and put her in, and told him where to drive her. She was very bad for two days, then she was well enough to get up. On the night before Christmas Eve mother came down to the kitchen, where I was picking raisins, and said: 'Ellen, Mrs. Brown's gentleman has been and gone, and she paid her bill at last, and is going to-morrow.' I saw Mrs. Brown very early next day, and she seemed happier and better than I had ever known her. She said to me:

"I'm going away, Ellen—home to the country, and to my friends. My darling husband is coming for me at eight o'clock."

"It was snowing fast, and very cold, and mother told her she was too poorly clad to face the storm. She only laughed, and said she would soon be beyond feeling cold. She wore a blue-and-white plaid summer dress, a blue-and-white summer shawl. Yes, those are fragments of both—I can swear to them. She had on a straw hat and a veil. At eight o'clock, or a minute or two before it, a vehicle for two persons drove up to the door. A man was sitting in it, with a muffler covering all the lower part of his face, and a fur cap pulled away down over his eyes. Mrs. Brown gave a cry of joy, and ran out of the room, and down to him at once. I saw him help her in and drive away. The clocks were striking eight as I went down to the kitchen to help get breakfast. That is all I know."

Miss Young identified the locket, the hair, the portions of dress, and was the last witness but one called by the coroner. Her mother was too ill to appear.

Doctor Leonard Williams gave his testimony as to the manner of death. He had examined the skull and found a circular aperture in the left temple. On measuring it it proved to be five-sixteenths of an inch in diameter. It was his opinion that the circular aperture in the skull was made by a pistol ball of very small size. He had no doubt the person to whom that skull belonged had been shot by a pistol bullet. A shot fired into the skull at that place would cause instant death—the person would die from the shock or from hemorrhage. The meningeal artery had been entirely severed, so that if the woman had not been instantly killed by the shock she would very speedily have died of hemorrhage.

The trial and all this evidence had occupied four days. The coroner told the jury this was all the evidence he had to offer. It was their duty to say who the party was whose remains had been found; if she came to her death by foul means; and, if so, by whose hand the deed was done.

The jury retired and were absent for about an hour. Dead silence reigned in the crowded court when they returned and gave their verdict. It was:

"That the remains found were those of Alice Warren, and that she came to her death by a pistol shot fired by the hand of Guy Ericscourt on the twenty-fourth of December, 1862."

The coroner then made out his warrant, committing Guy Ericscourt to prison for safe keeping until set free by due course of law.

(To be continued.)



[THE FORGED LETTER.]

LORD DANE'S ERROR.

CHAPTER IV.

Let no man abide this deed
But we the doers.

Julius Caesar.

In the eight years just passed his lordship had grown handsomer than ever. His tall, athletic shape, his smiling gray eyes, his dark, curling hair, and well-kept, flowing beard were unchanged.

This Earl of Dane was not a very good man, but he was no worse than most of his class—that class of rich and titled men who live for pleasure merely—and he had naturally a noble spirit and a generous heart. But he had contracted a habit of self-indulgence, which made him careless at what cost his pleasures were obtained.

It was in his own private sitting-room that he received Heath, an apartment hung and upholstered in crimson silk and velvet, and otherwise elegantly and sumptuously decorated.

The earl was still in his dressing-gown of crimson and gold coloured brocade, and had evidently just finished breakfasting in his own room, for a costly and exquisite breakfast service still stood with the remains of the repast.

A servant entered at the same moment with Heath to remove it.

"You have not breakfasted—you will take something, a cup of chocolate?" Lord Dane questioned of Heath.

"Thank you, no," Heath responded, decidedly, though food had not crossed his lips since Sybil Vassar had said her lofty good-bye to him the day before.

"Well, then, now for business," his lordship said, gaily, yet with an undercurrent of anxiety in his tone. "How have you prospered?"

"Badly, my lord," Heath replied, his brow clouding again. "I have not obtained the papers; and, if I had waited till doomsday in hope to receive them from the young lady you sent me to I should still have been disappointed."

The earl looked annoyed, then he laughed.

"Is that so? And I thought you were irresistible, old fellow. I did, by Jupiter! You see, you're just the style for that sort of thing, to my mind, with your ladyfied ways, your delicate complexion, your aristocratic, white hands. Don't get angry, now, Heath," he added as the other coloured deeply. "I didn't mean any offence, only you're such a romantic-looking youth, and handsome enough for an Antinous."

"My lord, you are in a jesting humour," Heath remonstrated, coldly.

"Not at all, I am very cross. What was in your way?"

"The young lady herself. She is by no means the simple and uncultured girl you imagine."

"Indeed?"

"She was prepared for me at all points, and appreciates the position too truly to surrender her prospect of a coronet for anything so unsubstantial as love."

"How bitterly you say it. What has little Miss Ugliness done to you?"

"How do you know she is ugly?"

"She was hideous when I saw her, that is all. I don't think she can have changed to a Venus since." A sharp pain rent Heath's heart at the thought of that remembered glorious loveliness.

"My lord," he asked, abruptly, "pardon me; but have you ever met again the young girl you knew at Falkner?"

"Never," and the nobleman's glance darkened.

"Nor obtained any knowledge of her?"

"Never. After that one week of elysium she vanished as completely as though we had never met. I have always suspected she resented my concealment of my title at first, or else that she discovered who I was, and was frightened, though it was by mutual consent that we each took another name from our own. She called herself Miss Channing, you remember; I was Mr. Talbot."

Heath's face whitened. It was as he suspected, then. Lord Dane had met Sybil Vassar and fallen in love with her without recognizing her. Should he tell him the truth, or question him more closely concerning the appearance of the mysterious beauty he had met at Falkner a year before?

The one he felt he could not do, at present certainly, the other he dare not, for fear of exciting the earl's suspicions. Beside, as to the last question of identity, there was scarcely room for doubt. Sybil herself had acknowledged a secret visit to Falkner a year before, one too of which she was ashamed.

Lord Dane had suddenly become silent and thoughtful. An expression of gloom had settled on his face, and his eyes were downcast or he must have noted his friend's discomposure and agitation. Suddenly he threw up his head:

"Did I ever tell you how much she looked like you, Vol?" Volney Heath started violently—Sybil look like him? Impossible. "Not in general features or anything of that sort, but in expression something about the mouth. She had the loveliest lips I ever saw on a woman."

Sybil had lovely lips too, scarlet and perfect as sculptor ever moulded. Should he ask what colour her hair was?

No, Sybil's hair was too peculiar. He was in terror, indeed, lest the earl should suddenly remember that his Falkner mystery had such coloured hair as Miss Ugliness, as he was fond of calling his memory of Rupert Vassar's child.

"What made you ask me about her, Vol?" Lord Dane asked. "You have a reason. You can't have stumbled upon a clue?"

"I wish I had, my lord; that is if you still care for the young girl you met at Falkner," Heath hurried to say, flushing uneasily. "I thought perhaps you might have forgotten her, and in that case might not be so averse as heretofore to marrying Miss Vassar."

Lord Dane leaped to his feet. The old, passionate anger that Rupert Vassar had roused blazed in his dark eyes.

"I shall never marry Rupert Vassar's daughter!" he said, with vehemence. "I would rather cease to be Lord Dane."

Heath gave him a startled look. Could the earldom be in question? His lordship had never told him the nature of the secret which Vassar possessed and had threatened him with. Lord Dane was pacing the long room in angry excitement.

"I beg your pardon," Heath hastened to say. "I had no idea you felt so keenly on the subject."

The earl paused in his stormy walk.

"I have always felt keenly. Why the villain has held this threat over my head for eight mortal years. Sooner than yield to his demands I would sweep crossings for my bread. If by any process I could be brought to consent to a marriage with his white-headed daughter I believe I should murder her as soon as the ceremony was completed."

"She has changed very much," Heath said, hesitatingly, and averting his face. "I should not be surprised if you called her beautiful now."

"Humph!" ejaculated his lordship, "I doubt it. But she may be beautiful as a Hourii for me. I should prove myself as destitute of any spirit of manhood as a whipped cur if I could be frightened into making her my wife. Beside," he added, in an altered tone, "I love another woman with all my soul and strength. I will never marry any woman but that one if it cost me my life."

Heath forced a laugh.

"I wish I were rich enough to be any temptation to Miss Vassar, and I'd marry her out of your way, my lord. I rather admire her."

Pity it was that Sybil could not have heard that speech.

The earl stopped again and looked at him as though he thought he might be half in earnest; then like a flash came a wicked thought to his lordship.

"The thing might be done, Vol, if you had the pluck and would." He gave Heath another queer, scrutinizing glance. "Of course you were not in earnest when you said you admired Miss Vassar?"

"I was quite in earnest, my lord."

"You wouldn't marry her?"

"I would to-day if she would have me; but she won't."

"Humph! See here, Vol—I'll give you fifty thousand pounds down for those papers. Couldn't you marry on that?"

Heath started from his chair, his face flushing like fire. Then he sat down again and bowed his head upon his hand, while that burning flush slowly died, leaving him white again like marble.

"Sybil Vassar has in her own possession the papers you wish to secure," he said, in a low voice. "I have reason to feel very sure of that. You will have to marry her yourself to obtain them, my lord."

The earl looked startled, but he shook his head angrily.

"I never will—never!"

He hesitated for a moment, looking at Heath more and more excitedly. Then he came close beside him.

"I have a plan," he said—"a very wild and hare-brained thought you will call it—but promise me that you will not be angry, and I will tell you what it is."

"I will not be angry," said Heath.

"Well then, you say you are willing to marry Miss Vassar if she will have you, and you say that you know she has those papers in her possession. Here is my purse. Take it, and go out and purchase the most elegant diamond ring you can find. Then go back to Graystone, and tell Sybil Vassar you are Lord Dane—that your previous visit was a bit of romance, undertaken for the purpose of seeing her without being yourself known. She has never seen me since she was a child. I will write her father to come and see me on this very business. So he will not be in your way. Marry her or not, as pleases you, but, if you have half the cleverness I believe you to possess, you can marry her enough to get hold of those papers, and I'll give you a cheque for the money the hour you place them in my hand here. It's a chance you won't often come by to take a fortune like that at one sweep."

Heath did not answer for some moments. His brain was on fire long before the earl ceased speaking. Wild and impracticable as Lord Dane's proposition seemed, and in opposition to every principle of honour and truth, it almost took away his breath with its dazzling allurement.

Sybil his wife, Sybil in all her incomparable and tantalizing loveliness his own to have and to own!

The thought ran through him like a fiery draught. He did not speak, because he could not—because the mere imagination of marrying the strange, beautiful creature who had so enthralled him agitated him for the moment beyond words.

His voice was husky as at last he said:

"She remembers you. She is one of those who never forget."

Dane shrugged his shoulders.

"You have only to convince her that she is mistaken if she imagines such a thing, and if you have not a cunning enough tongue to persuade a girl not yet sixteen into anything you don't deserve your money, after living where she has been all her life too."

Heath drew a deep breath, like one under a spell. It was not the money he was thinking of—ah, no! It was the wild, almost frightful feasibility of the plan by which he might, he believed, make his own the girl upon whom he had in so short a time poured all the passion and worship of his soul.

Lord Dane threw his purse down upon the table.

"You'd better do it, Heath. You will find that I'm a man who can appreciate such a service as this. Heavens, you don't know what I'll owe you if you work the thing out right! I'll do what I've said, and I'll do more. I'd rather give it to you than Vassar a long way. I always liked you, Vol."

Heath smiled faintly. He was deadly pale, and his eyes glittered.

"If you should marry her," Dane went on, "here is my town house at your disposal, and should you wish you can prolong the illusion indefinitely. You may take her to Leusleigh as long as you like. My own servants there don't know me. I have never been there you know, though I had it all refitted last year, expecting to take a large party down for the summer months."

The earl's face darkened slightly.

Heath knew the story. Some soothsayer or astrologer had told Lord Dane that he would die at Leusleigh, and, though he would have been loath to acknowledge that he was influenced by the prediction at all,

he never went there. He had made an excuse to take even the party invited to Leusleigh to another country seat of his.

CHAPTER V.

My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain.

King Richard III.

IMMEDIATELY after that interview between the lord and the ruined gentleman mentioned in the first chapter of our story Rupert Vassar had written to Lord Dane a letter, which concluded with these words:

"If before the day I have named to you,"—the day named was the fourteenth of April, in a certain year—Sybil Vassar's sixteenth birthday—"you have not sent for me or come to me, and consented to my terms, too, then the papers in my possession which can destroy you shall be put in the proper hands to humble you to your kindred dust. You shall taste ignominy and drink ruin to the dregs."

Talbot Dane had never doubted that Vassar would keep his word. It was with a certain malicious satisfaction, therefore, that he indited and despatched that mischievous epistle which was to summon him from Graystone upon pretence of coming to an "arrangement," when really the only intention was to lure him from his guard over Sybil, and leave the way clear for Heath to approach her on his treacherous mission.

For a man who had lived in the reckless, lavish fashion Rupert Vassar had till his wife's death to settle down to the economy and monotony of Graystone, as he had, was remarkable, certainly. It showed that he was capable of adopting and following out a definite purpose, little as his mastery, fickle and aimless course before had proved it. But he had chafed under that long restraint. If his daughter hated Graystone he loathed and abhorred its ancestral walls.

As the period for Lord Dane's decision drew near he controlled his impatience and excessive irritation only by summoning before him visions of those splendours to which he meant his daughter's marriage with the rich and powerful earl should restore him.

He had reared Sybil himself. He fancied he had imbued her with his own ambitious hopes and aims; that he had made his influence over her suzerain and ever control and direct her. As Countess of Dane she would have a magnificent income of her own; if Dane made the princely settlements Vassar meant he should.

Sybil's marvellous beauty, for which Dane was quite unprepared now, should make her husband her slave, obedient to her slightest wish.

By means of that vast wealth the ruined house of Vassar should be restored to something of its former grandeur, and he, Rupert Vassar, should shine again in those brilliant London circles of which he had once been a conspicuous ornament.

To do him justice, however, Rupert Vassar was not altogether so selfish as he seemed. The child he had so carefully trained for eight years, and into whose existence he had, as it were, merged his own, had grown to be an object of almost passionate idolatry and pride with him. Had it been put to him directly he would have swept crossings or sold matches sooner than behold Sybil fall now of that dazzling eminence he had striven so desperately to secure for her.

He never thought of doubting the honesty of that deceitful summons which Lord Dane sent him. On the contrary, he made all haste to respond to it, taking leave of his daughter in a sort of mysterious rapture.

"Be astonished at nothing," he said as he embraced her. "Expect any strange and wonderful event very shortly, and, above all, should I send for you to come to me in London, be sure that you come instantly. Your maid may accompany you, and, perhaps Hall."

Such were Vassar's curiously significant parting words. He was excited and nearly delirious with joy at what seemed to him the approaching realization of his wildest dreams. It would have been singular, indeed, if, in the after events, Sybil had not recalled her father's parting words, and imagined herself obeying them literally.

Heath made his appearance the very morning succeeding Vassar's departure, and was shown into the small but handsome drawing-room.

Sybil was already there, slowly pacing the dusky apartment, a favourite habit with her; and the servant who ushered in Heath, sweeping aside a velvet curtain to admit the light, disclosed her suddenly to her agitated visitor.

Never, perhaps, had she looked more lovely in her desperate lover's eyes than now, as, after a moment's startled hesitation, she came slowly forward and greeted him with courteous but icy phrase.

Sybil, indeed, experienced an emotion of anger at sight of him which she would have been troubled to explain. Possibly she feared that his fair, winning, handsome face would tempt her from her resolve to secure power, wealth, rank, and luxury, even at the cost of marrying a man who would make her his wife upon compulsion, if at all. Certainly she believed that Heath had taken advantage of her father's absence to come back to Graystone and make one more appeal to her to give up everything for him. Thus she read his flushed and agitated countenance, his deep eyes darkening with feeling, and the anger of the arrogant and self-willed girl rose at the thought.

But her very coldness nerved Heath for his difficult undertaking.

He waited till the servant had departed before he said, calmly:

"You are not glad to see me. I did not expect you would be."

Sybil's snowy cheek flushed faintly, and her haughty glance wavered.

"I am surprised, that is all," she said, without looking at him.

"You might have been very sure I should not have intruded upon you, after our last conversation, had not the need been of so urgent a nature that even you could scarcely blame me," and he laid a letter on her dilapidated lap. "Your father made me the bearer of this."

As he said the words it seemed to him that all the blood in his body went creeping to his face for shame.

Volney Heath had perhaps had many things to answer for in his life, which had been devoted mostly to pleasure seeking. He was something of an adventurer, but esteemed an honourable man as the world goes, and he never had deliberately uttered an untruth till now as he said to Sybil:

"Your father made me the bearer of this."

The letter was his own clever fabrication, which had cost him many hours of severe application, but never the pang of self-contempt which the utterance of the falsehood concerning it now did.

He felt as if the proud, clear eyes of the girl he was so mad to win must read the audacious deceit in his shamed face.

But the forgery was too well executed.

Sybil recognized, or fancied she recognized her father's hand in the superscription.

"Can papa have sent him to conduct me to London?" she thought as she opened the letter.

What she saw there riveted sight and sense alike.

She looked up persistently, her superb eyes scathing the handsome forced composure of Heath's white face like lightning.

"You Lord Dane?" she said, slowly, and so incredulously that it cost Heath a terrible effort to control his features.

He smiled.

"Are you so sorry?" he asked.

Sybil's excited eyes went back to her letter. She read it all through a second time, then looked in that scathing way at Heath again—miserable Heath, who was waiting in agony, and controlling his nerves and impatience with difficulty.

"I certainly thought I should know Lord Dane again if I ever met him," she said, at last, coldly drawing back as Heath tried to take her hand. "I am compelled to believe that you are he by this letter from papa, who knows Lord Dane so perfectly, but you will have to be patient a little, till I have realized it."

Heath looked pained and chagrined.

"Are then your recollections of Lord Dane as you knew him eight years ago so agreeable?" he said, with some feeling.

"Far from it."

"How then are you so reluctant to accept me as Lord Dane? I hoped—I was mad enough to hope, Sybil, that under my assumed name of Heath I had so improved upon that hateful recollection you must have of Lord Dane that you would be relieved and glad to hear that I was he."

"Perhaps I am," Sybil answered, and for the third time read her letter.

Then she gravely extended her hand.

"My lord," she said, with a stately inclination of her small head, "I surrender my doubts. There is no reasonable ground upon which I can hold them."

Volney Heath took the little cool hand in his, which trembled and throbbed with fever heat. He saw or imagined he saw that the instinct or intellect of this girl whom he sought to make his own by such base means revolted from her own declaration of belief in him.

He felt that what was to be done must be accomplished quickly, before she had time to reflect on the improbability of his story.

"Will you marry me, Sybil?" he said, eagerly. "Will you forget, or try to do so, that hostility to me which my own cruelty and impertinence gave you full occasion for, and marry me?"

"My lord, before I answer you explain to me why you came here as Volney Heath instead of as your proper self?"

"I have already told you one reason; another was that I might see what sort of a woman the child made."

"You had serious misgivings without doubt," Sybil said, sarcastically.

"I have none now. I love you as I never expected to love any woman. I will be frank with you and acknowledge that I had my misgivings, as you call them, when I came."

"Had you found me as ugly as you had a right to expect what would your course have been then, my lord?" Sybil asked, maliciously.

"At the risk of incurring your scorn and contempt, I must confess that it would have been the same as now. I intended to accept Mr. Vassar's terms."

Sybil flushed as she said, impatiently.

"I think, my lord, you and I will have no contempt or scorn to bestow upon each other after we have expended what is due on ourselves. If your motives in asking me to be your wife are not such as you would be proud of, mine, in accepting your bond, are quite as mercenary and ignoble. I will marry you, my lord, but I wish you to distinctly understand that I do so, not for yourself, not from any love I bear you, but merely for the sake of sharing your rank and wealth."

The proud girl drew herself up, and looked haughtily at her lover as she spoke.

Heath's face was very white. He looked disturbed and unhappy. At the bottom of his heart he had believed all along that Sybil loved him, and he had even soothed his conscience concerning the deceit by which he meant to win her with this assurance. But this cold, proud creature—would she ever love any one, above all him, and when she knew how he had deceived her?

Sybil flushed and paled alternately as she read that handsome, agitated face.

"I deserve that you should feel thus," he said, at last, "but it is you whom I love, and for the sake of you I would this moment risk that to save which you believe I wish to marry you."

Sybil made a gesture of incredulity, and, glancing back at her letter said, coldly:

"Will you tell me now, my lord, what my father's reasons can be for desiring me to marry you at once, and without himself being present? He gives you leave to do so—but, of course, you have read the letter?"

Heath bowed.

"Your father showed it to me. I should much prefer not to give you those reasons, unless you insist."

"I do insist, certainly I do."

"You will be pained."

"Very well, I should like to be pained, my lord. I am in a dream. I am asleep and dreaming. A little pain might wake me."

Heath bent his handsome head again, and his face crimsoned to the forehead, for he was about to utter another and deliberate falsehood to the woman whose scorn to him would have been worse than death.

"It is a moneyed embarrassment," he said, in a low voice, "which keeps Mr. Vassar away from you. A temporary but yet serious affair which he would not permit me to relieve him from, save as—"

Sybil finished the awkward sentence for him.

"Save as his daughter's husband," she said, her voice suddenly husky. "Is it so serious as that? Very well, my lord; I leave all arrangements with you. I am at your command. With your permission I will be excused now until lunch is ready. I will send a servant to attend you to your apartment."

She was leaving the room with one of her haughty, graceful inclinations when Heath sprang forward:

"Sybil, say one word of kindness to me for Heaven's sake. If you know how I suffer!"

"My lord, I was not aware that I—"

"Do you not then believe that I love you? You? or are you indeed so utterly selfish and mercenary as you have pretended to be? Good Heavens! I wish from my soul I had never seen you."

He turned and threw himself upon a seat, covering his face with his hands.

Sybil stood for a moment irresolute, then she walked to his side and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"My lord," she said, "you know what cause I have to regard Lord Dane with kindness. Volney Heath was dear to me against all my resolves to the contrary. You will have to wait some time, I am afraid, before the aversion I have entertained so

many years for the one can be lost in regard for the other."

He turned and caught her hand to his lips; but she drew it from him firmly and quitted the room.

"She is ice—she is stone," muttered Heath, in a sort of frenzy. "I shall not after all get the price for which I have sold my soul."

The pair met again at lunch.

Heath had regained his composure, Sybil was more gracious.

Realizing how far from won his prize was even now, Heath had spent the interval in concerting his plans and in endeavouring to recall those old graces of manner and conversation—those gifts of fascination—which had hitherto made him so popular with women.

He met Sybil calmly, exerted himself to entertain this untired girl as he had never in his life before striven to please any woman.

Sybil was won out of herself. She smiled frequently, and responded almost gaily. Her lover's spirits rose.

"She shall yet love me as I love her," he said to himself, exultantly; "and then I shall confess all to her and be forgiven. It is never difficult for a woman to forgive the man she loves."

But at the same moment that he reasoned thus he was torn with pangs of distrust of his own inferences.

Scotland was in sight beyond the cliffs which shut in Graystone, and it was settled that to avoid the formality and delay of the English law they should go thither for the ceremony on the following morning.

They spent the interval between lunch and dinner together, separating soon after the latter meal. Adèle had received her orders. The packing was all done, and Sybil's dress for the morrow's ceremony placed ready for her.

The day had fled happily to Sybil, more so than she would have been willing to acknowledge; but as she entered her own apartments she found her spirits sinking unaccountably.

Too inexperienced in actual life to be really suspicious of her lover, she yet found herself weighed down by an oppressive uneasiness and doubt which she was too unskilled to attempt to analyze.

She passed a sleepless night, and he who called himself Lord Dane seemed not to have slept any better. He looked pale and worn as with anxious vigils.

Heath was indeed not only tortured by his conscience but his anxieties. Sybil was not yet his wife, and some untoward event might at any moment send Vassar home to unmask him.

Farewell then for ever to his hopes of her. She would never forgive the unsuccessful deceit.

As he met Sybil in the morning, already attired for the ceremony, he retained the little hand she gravely extended to him long enough to slip upon one of those taper fingers a magnificent diamond solitaire.

"I forgot this yesterday," he said, and led her to her seat at the breakfast-table, which was awaiting them.

Sybil possessed all a woman's passion for rare jewels, and her glance at the really superb stone expressed more real pride and confidence than she had yet experienced. It was as if it were a foretaste of her coming grandeur, a token of the reality of that future she had anticipated so long.

Her lover was far from being at his ease. In three hours at most he meant to be on his way to the Scottish coast, but what might not happen before that time? He started at every sound, and glanced at the door constantly as though he expected it to open at any instant to admit the man who had been enticed away that his treasure might be stolen.

A knock at the door of the breakfast parlour really came at last, and Heath, forgetting everything but his fears, sprang up and opened it himself.

Hall, the footman, stood there.

"A telegram has just come for Miss Vassar," he began, but Heath pushed him violently backward, tore the envelope from his hand, and instantly concealed it.

"Your mistress is not well this morning. She must not be frightened," he said, slipping a gold piece into the man's hand. "I will attend to this."

Hall hesitated, looking frightened and bewildered, then, with Heath's compelling intense blue eyes following him, retreated as he had come.

Heath re-entered the breakfast-room. To Sybil's inquiring and amazed looks he responded, with a forced smile:

"It was only a little surprise I was preparing for you, darling, and the man, not knowing it was to be a secret yet, came near betraying me."

Sybil blushed and smiled, and glanced at her diamond.

Volney stole the first moment that he was alone to

read the telegram. It was, as he feared, from Vassar himself:

"Heath is a villain. Beware of him. I start on my way to you at one o'clock."

Heath tore it into small pieces and flung it on the fire, with a shamed, a desperate, and darkening face.

"What can have put him on the track so quickly?" he said to himself. "I must get away from here, and fortunately I have time, if I don't waste any of it. How long shall I be able to keep them apart I wonder?"

Sybil little guessed what had brought that stern, desperate look into her lover's face as they drove away towards the Scottish coast. As little did she comprehend the motive for that wild haste he made, that restless impatience which characterized all his movements, though she noticed with a half-fearful thrill the almost fierceness of his glances towards herself.

Heath had sent a man on before to arrange everything, but nothing was arranged. In spite of all his efforts, his mad impatience, his desperate offers of money, they were delayed several hours, waiting for a minister to perform the ceremony. But it was accomplished at last, though in so hurried a manner and Sybil was snatched away so rapidly that she scarcely realized that a marriage had really taken place till her maid, who had accompanied them, first saluted her as "my lady."

Back they hastened to the English coast, re-entered the waiting carriage, and drove at once to the station to meet the evening express. Once in the train, and Heath felt that he should be temporarily safe. They should pass Vassar, coming down by the one o'clock train, in the night.

The luggage had been sent forward before they left Graystone. All that grand Parisian wardrobe which Rupert Vassar had ordered for his daughter amid such brilliant anticipations had been repacked and forwarded to the station, where the piled-up boxes waited for Heath to check them.

Having escorted Sybil to the compartment he had secured to themselves, he proceeded to attend to this duty.

There was barely time. He felt glad that the time was so short. Only a few moments now, and they should be off. Sybil was his wife. Her father could not alter that if he were there that moment. And yet he was consumed with a frightful misgiving. He felt an inward presentiment that just in the hour of success his victory was about to be snatched from him.

(To be continued.)

THE EMPEROR Napoleon has addressed a letter to the generals who commanded at the battle of Sedan. His Majesty declares that the army did its duty nobly, and by its bravery saved the honour of France. He claims the full responsibility for the capitulation, which, he says, was a cruel but inexorable necessity.

THE HUMOURS OF A DIRECTORY.—The Portsmouth, N.H., Directory for 1872 contains some singular names. For instance, there are Coffins, Barrells, Haddock, Beans, Coffee, Rice, Cotton, Hams, Ashes, Bowles, Files, Quills, a Tarbox, a Rose, a Pillow, and Muchmore. The ancient name of Smith, of which there are 19, is excelled by the Rands, who count up 37, then the Mardens 32, the Hams 23, Walkers 25, Clarks 23, Browns 21, and Jones, Adams, and Locke 20 each. Of the different colours there are 21 Greens, 13 Grays, 21 Browns, 13 Whites, and but 1 Black. Of the trades 9 are Masons, 4 Taylors, 3 Cutters, 8 Butlers, 3 Cooks, 3 Bakers, 3 Chamberlains, a Carpenter, a Chandler, a Barber, 12 Gardeners, a Dyer, a Sawyer, 4 Plumbers, a Driver, a Hunter, and a Pfeiffer, while for the 3 Mills there are 4 Millers. It is governed by 12 Lords, 8 Marshalls, 3 Kings, the same number of Nobles, a Benedict, and a Gentleman. There are 9 Bells and but 1 Church. It has 1 Wall for 3 Sheds and 2 Barnes. Ten are Smart, 2 Bright, 1 Prime, 1 Keen, 1 Wise, 3 Husseys, and 1 Young; 1 is Hard, another Hardy, and still another is Harder. It has its Goins and Cummings. Of Presidents, Washington, Monroe, Adams, Jackson, Taylor, Pierce, Johnson and Grant are represented. It has a Horn, a Spear, a Fisher, 2 Hooks and 2 Bates for every Fish. John has 14 sons, Jack 12, Daniel 5, David 2, and James only 1. Martins, Partridges, Hawkes, Hares and Parrots flourish. Five Leaches take care of its Burns and Fitts. It has 1 Quill and only 2 Pages for its Laws and Cases, and but 1 Key for its 20 Locks. It has 11 Sides, 3 Long, 1 Lowe and 1 Handy; and one-half as much Frost as Snow. The months of March and May are represented, yet it has only 6 Weeks, 3 Days, and 2 Knights. Of cities and Towns, Lynn, Hartford, Elliot, Ayres, and Ellingwood. It has 6 Wards, and like a politician has its Price. While there are 14 Halls, there are 3 Garretts, only 9 Holmes, 10 Lanes, 19 Hills, only 2 Towles, and 1 Gate. Its water department consists of 8 Brooks, 2

Lakes, 3 Wells, and a Freshett. Three are Devine, 2 in Grace, 6 Neal, 10 Pray, and 2 Dupray; 7 are in Joy and 3 in Payne, while 1 is Gay. The shortest names are Rix and Cox, the longest Charlesworth, and of the one-syllable names Vaughan boasts the most letters. Then there is a Kuhl, a Sughrue, an Ar-Showe, a Goebel, a Lucy, a Rheautun, a Racklyt, an Entwistle, an Ouderkerk, and a Cowbig. Zara foots the list.—*Portsmouth Journal*.

ARE ANTS PIRATES?—It has been asserted that ants are more of pirate-catchers than pirates. The following, taken from a popular authority, would appear to show that a contrary opinion exists. Which is correct?—"Keep a sharp eye on ants and aphides. They often work sad havoc on orchard-house trees in blossom. The ants eat out the hearts of the flowers, and help the aphides to drain the plants dry of their richest sap. No quarter must be given to either. Every aphid should be washed off or killed with smoke, by Gishurst's Compound, or other mixture. The ants should be enticed into a treacle-pot, seasoned with arsenic; or they must be traced to their lairs and destroyed with boiling water. No quarter must be given to the ants, for, as has lately been shown by Mr. Newman, they simply milk the aphides that they may drink more sap, and establish new colonies in fresh pastures, and among our greenest leaves, just as we might look out richer fields for our own cows when the milk threatened to run short."

THE CAVERNE DU CARILLON SKELETON.—As it seemed highly desirable for some English geologist to become acquainted with all the facts connected with the recent discovery of the skeleton in the Caverne du Carillon, on the confines of France and Italy, Sir William Tite, M.P., commissioned Mr. William Pengelly, F.R.S., well known for his researches in Kent, and other caverns in Devon and Cornwall, to examine the remains and the place where they were discovered. This remarkable relic of a most remote antiquity was discovered by a French geologist, M. Rivierre, who removed the skeleton to Paris, and, of course, until his account is published Mr. Pengelly cannot give the result of his own inquiries. Acting upon Sir William Tite's suggestion, Mr. Pengelly proceeded to Paris, where he met M. Rivierre, and examined the skeleton at the Jardin des Plantes, and then proceeded to Mentone, where every attention was shown to Mr. Pengelly by Madame Rivierre, and as he was the bearer of M. Rivierre's order Mr. Pengelly enjoyed the advantage of examining the explorations.

THE LATE LORD MAYO.—The King of Oude is reported to have been much moved when he heard of the tragedy at the Andamans. He ordered all his establishments to be closed for five days, and all but one of the gates of his palace to be shut, including particularly the one through which Lord Mayo passed on the occasion of his Excellency's visit. He had also desired that the religious ceremonies which took place on the occasion of the Bakr-Eed festival should be unattended by music or pomp of any kind. His Highness the Maharajah Scindiah showed his regret at Lord Mayo's untimely and sad death by going into mourning, as also did his court at Gwalior. Minute guns were fired at Morar, and all the bazaars and public offices were closed for two days. The Calcutta public are not satisfied with the more municipal expression of grief at the death of Lord Mayo on the part of the Corporation of Justices. A public meeting of the inhabitants is demanded. His Highness the Rana of Dholapore arrived in Agra on the 16th ult. With good taste and feeling, his Highness especially requested that the usual salute should be dispensed with, as a mark of his respect for the memory of Lord Mayo, and regret for the calamity which has lately befallen the Government of India.

POACHING IN ENGLAND AND WALES.—In addition to 8,913 poachers convicted under the game laws in England and Wales, in 1871, there were 63 convictions of men for being out armed and assaulting gamekeepers. Out of the 8,976 only 429 ventured out at night, which is supposed to be the most auspicious and profitable time for those idle and desperate characters who have been by some novelists and political economists very injudiciously elevated to the rank of village heroes. The numbers convicted for roaming after game in the daylight were 7,725—in round numbers 18 times as many as at night. For illegally selling or buying game 28 were convicted and 731 under Poaching Act (1862), 25 and 26 Vic., cap. 114. The largest number of convictions took place in Yorkshire—namely, 844, 755 of which were for day poaching, 37 for night poaching, 6 for illegally selling or buying game, and 46 under Poaching Act (1862). The county of Durham cuts the next sorriest figure on the list, with 404 total convictions, made up of 360 day poachers, 17 night poachers, 2 illegal sellers or buyers of game, and 25 under Poaching Act (1862). After Durham comes Lancaster with 385, then Somerset with 379, then Stafford with 365, then Southampton with 334, Derby with 318, and

Chester with 306 total convictions. The other counties are all below 300, the lowest being Brecon, in Wales, where only 13 convictions took place. Convictions on indictments for being out armed, taking game, and assaulting gamekeepers, took place in 17 counties—namely, 1 in Berks, 1 in Derby, 2 in Dorset, 4 in Gloucester, 1 in Hereford, 11 in Herts (beyond the Metropolitan police district), 1 in Kent (beyond the Metropolitan police district), 3 in Lancaster, 1 in Lincoln, 1 in Monmouth, 1 in Norfolk, 2 in Nottingham, 6 in Oxford, 3 in Southampton, 12 in Sussex, 3 in Wilts, and 10 in Worcester.

THE COST OF A PARTY.

"I DECLARE it is too mortifying!" exclaimed a brilliant brunette, throwing aside the morning paper with an impatient gesture.

"What is, Jennie?" asked the gentle-looking girl beside her.

"Why, just to think that every lady, with any pretensions to respectability, has given a party this season but us! I declare I am truly ashamed to accept any invitations, as we have not returned the politeness, nor have any prospect of doing so. I don't know what papa is thinking about. Whenever I've spoken about it he has given me not a bit of encouragement; and I'm just going to take the matter into my own hands. I will ask him just once more, and, if he should not agree, I will have a party if—no matter what it costs," Jennie replied, with a determined look on her handsome face.

"Jennie, don't talk so! Have you not noticed that the lines of care on father's face have deepened much lately? I know all is not well with him. He is troubled I see plainly, and is striving not to cast the shadow of it over his family. If he could have given you a party you know he would have done so long ago. When did he ever refuse us any pleasure he could bestow? He has been too indulgent I fear, and we too extravagant. I heard Mr. Barnard say last evening that many of the oldest firms in the city were tottering, and the proprietors would have to be very skilful to weather the financial storm. I fear papa may be among those anxious ones. Don't worry him, Jennie dear," pleaded the younger sister, her fair, sweet face growing sadder as Jennie quickly answered:

"Oh, nonsense—it is nothing of the kind! Papa is growing penurious, and wants to economize; saving money is what he wants to do."

"I think he wants to do more than that, Jennie—save his name and honour—"

"There, stop, Gertie; I don't want to listen to a sermon on that subject! I've known papa to get these spells before. I am determined. Mamma will not object I know; so a party I'll have. But here is mamma now."

Mrs. Halstead, entering the room, inquired concerning the subject under discussion.

Jennie repeated what she had said to her sister, concluding with:

"Now, mamma, don't you think we might manage to give one? I've a particular reason for wishing it just now."

"I hardly think we can, Jennie. I've noticed your father's depressed look. He is worried about something, and I would not like to ask him now."

"Mamma, might we not manage it without asking him?" Jennie asked, with such a sweet, pleading expression in her dark eyes, as she leaned her head caressingly on her mother's shoulder, and whispered:

"I should like so much for Captain Lovell to see me do the honours. He was admiring Ada Lawton's dignity and grace the other evening when she presided at her party."

She blushed a little and looked so lovely that her mother felt disposed to help her favourite child, yet scarcely knew how it could be done.

Jennie saw she was yielding, and said:

"Mamma, I have twelve pounds. If you had as much we could pay Gilbert that for the supper in advance, and he would gladly wait for the balance three or six months."

"I have twenty-five that your father gave me this morning to pay several little bills. Perhaps they might be put off—that is, a part of them, those not so pressing. But you forget the music."

"Oh, dear, yes! Five more, that must be paid at the time. Couldn't you spare that, mamma?"

"I must pay four to Bridget I owe her for last quarter, and this one has nearly gone. I must keep her, which I cannot do if I do not pay her. Then your father told me to be sure to give four to John."

"Oh, mamma, divide the four between Bridget and John, and let us have the party. Papa need not know anything about it until it comes, and he won't worry over what he cannot help. You'll never regret it, you darling mamma! We won't mind what it costs,"

Jennie said, then in a happy mood, having succeeded in winning her mother to her will, she knew.

George Halstead sat in his office, a weight of care plainly visible on his sad face. He was evidently waiting for the coming of some one.

At length the door opened, and he arose to meet the visitor, saying:

"Thank you for coming, Walton. Courtesy would demand my seeking you; but you understand me. I thought you would. Here you can say things to me perhaps you would hesitate to in your own house. Six months ago you lifted the burden from my mind and heart. I told you, with your relief I could stem the tide. To-day I am a ruined man. Difficulties have increased on every side. I cannot meet my liabilities either to you or others, although Heaven knows how hard I have striven. In ten days at the farthest the crash must come."

"Halstead, I have seen its coming. I must be plain with you. You would have more sympathy when this is known had the extravagance of your family been less manifest."

A half-suppressed groan escaped the miserable man. His friend went on:

"It would be more cruel to withhold this than say it to you. You are keeping up an establishment of magnificence scarcely justifiable in a man of large fortune. Your wife and daughters are the most elegantly and expensively dressed women in town. Your boys—"

"Stop, stop! in mercy stop! To one you are unjust. Gertrude—"

"Yes, I should have excepted her. I know she is a noble girl. Have you talked with her?"

"No, no; I could not bear to grieve her loving heart any sooner than necessary. Walton, I would willingly die to save them from this trouble. In truth now, at times, I fear I shall go mad. I have not sent for you to ask for any delay; it would not help me; only to make an assignment of all my effects to you, as a preferred creditor. What may we left you will do the best you can with."

"Stop a moment, Halstead. What amount would save you?"

"Not less than five thousand pounds."

Mr. Walton remained in deep thought for several moments. Then raising his eyes to his friend's he said:

"Halstead, that sum I will place at your command this day week if you will promise me to make a radical reform in your household. Make your sons dependent on their own exertions. See that they obtain no credit. And make your wife and daughters understand the trouble you are in. Do this within the week and you are saved. Take my counsel, and in less than five years you will be a free man."

"Heaven bless you, Walton! my more than friend! I will do it. You who will save me shall counsel and guide."

"Very well; I shall be a stern master. You will find me ready when you are. Cheer up now. Good-bye. I've an engagement at six."

Mrs. Halstead and Jennie had fully decided upon the party at any rate, and when her father returned home that evening, his face wearing a more hopeful expression, Jennie whispered:

"I told you nothing was wrong with papa. See how pleasant he looks!"

"Mother, wait a while. Don't give up to Jennie's whims. You know, if father was not in some trouble, he would not have refused Jennie when she asked him to let her have the party," said Gertie.

But her pleading was useless. Preparations went on for a grand party. Jennie triumphantly said: "Fortune has favoured us," when her father told them he should have to go away on business, to be absent three or four days, possibly longer.

"Let me find you all at home when I return, at farthest, Thursday evening. I want to have a council of peace, I hope," he said, smiling pleasantly, when he bade them good-bye.

"We will all be at home," Mrs. Halstead and Jennie replied, while Gertie stole out after her father, and, winding her arms round his neck, said:

"You have been looking so worried lately, father. Are you feeling better now?"

"Yes, yes, little one. It was a passing cloud. Things look brighter now. I will tell you all when I return, and shall want your help, my best child. Now run in."

Invitations were issued for Thursday night. That night George Halstead had fixed to disclose to his family his exact circumstances. Two days after Mr. Walton would fulfil his promise, and then all would be well.

Never did Jennie Halstead look more beautiful than when she stood, smiling, and conscious of the admiring gaze from eyes in whose sight she cared alone to triumph.

The magnificent rooms were filled to their utmost capacity. It was decidedly the party of the season.

The band was playing one of Strauss's beautiful waltzes when Jennie, supported by the arm of Captain Lovell through the dance, raised her eyes to the door. Standing there—the pallor of whose face frightened her then, and haunted her for ever after—was her father.

Gertie, who, resisting the combined efforts of all, refused to join the merry throng, was watching for his coming.

She drew him with her far away into an upper room, off from the company, and there, through the night, strove to calm the fevered state into which the shock had thrown him.

The next morning, when Gertie, seeing him somewhat relieved, threw herself down for a few moments' rest, a servant, never dreaming of the mischief he was doing, bore to Mr. Halstead the note which Gertie found afterwards, and which somewhat explained the sad sequel of our story. This was it:

"FRIEND HALSTEAD,—Last evening's event proves clearly that you have not the firmness, possibly not the disposition, to do your duty. Why should I try to save you? You need proceed no farther on my assistance.—Yours, A. WALTON."

That night, evading the loving girl, George Halstead stole from his home, never to return.

Days passed, yet he came not. At last the river cleared the terrible mystery. On its bank were cast the remains of the miserable man—the sad result of woman's vanity, extravagance, and carelessness.

The verdict, "Accidental death by drowning when in a fit of temporary insanity," was given by the jury, and accepted by the people. But I think another verdict might be found, which would more clearly explain this case and many others: "Driven to death by woman's folly." Men sometimes are more considerate than wise.

It was a terrible blow to the gentle, loving Gertie. Not a thought she spent on the loss of worldly possessions—for her dear father alone she grieved. But her sorrow was freed from the bitter pangs of conscience.

F. H. B.

THE EARLIEST PRINTED BOOK.—Ulric Zell, the first Cologne printer, was probably a workman of Schœffer's. His first book is dated 1468, and he is believed to have been the instructor of William Caxton. Mr. Humphreys thinks this was the case; though Mr. Blades, in his "Life of Caxton," attempts to prove that Colard Mansion, of Bruges, was his instructor. Some critics have assigned Caxton's earliest works to Zell; but, if this is so, he did not use his own types. Let us now briefly consider the life and works of Caxton. The great printer was born in 1412, in the Weald of Kent. After beginning his education at a small grammar school he completed it in London. He probably went to the metropolis at the age of fifteen; but then he entered the service of Robert Strange, a mercer, afterwards Lord Mayor. When Strange died, in 1441, he left Caxton the sum of twenty marks, and then the future printer established a business on his own account. He followed this a very short time, for in the last-mentioned year he is believed to have gone to the Low Countries—in what capacity is not known, perhaps as agent for the London Mercers' confraternity. We hear nothing of him until 1464, when the King of England (Edward IV.) gave him an official commission at the Burgundian Court, the confirmation of a commercial treaty. The dominions of the Duke of Burgundy at that time were larger than those of the King of France, and the Court at Bruges was kept up with great magnificence. Philip the Good was a great patron of letters, Raoul le Febvre had made a very successful French paraphrase of the "Iliad"; a magnificent copy was illuminated for presentation to the duke, and this is still in the Bibliothèque at Bruxelles. It was presented in 1464, and so great was the popularity of the work that M. Bernard suggests the art of printing was introduced to supply the demand for copies. This work was printed before 1467, and there is every reason to believe that it was produced under the direction of the duke himself, at a press erected in the ducal palace. Mr. Humphreys dwells on the important fact that on the accession of Charles the Bold, who married Margaret, sister of Edward IV. of England, Caxton, a great favourite of the duchess, made an English translation of this work, and, in afterwards printing it, used the same types which had been employed in the French edition. It has also been suggested that the types used for the French "Recueil" were prepared under Caxton's direction, and that, when ready, the printing of the work was carried out at Cologne by Ulric Zell, but did not bear his name, as being the private property of the duke. If this was so Caxton may have left the types with Zell, and then they were ready for the works known to have been printed by him at Cologne, the "Jason" and his translation. Another hypothesis is that the French work was printed in the ducal palace at Bruges, and the types removed to

Cologne on the death of Duke Philip in 1467. The "Jason" was a second part of the French "Recueil," and was printed by Caxton, at Cologne, in 1471. About three years before that he had commenced a translation of Raoul le Febvre's book, but from various causes was not able to finish it till 1471, and printed the book at Cologne the latter part of the same year. This is the first printed book in the English language.

A DARING GAME; OR, NEVA'S THREE LOVERS.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE conclusion of the low and cautious knocking upon the office door of Mr. Atkins was lost in a wild burst of the gale, which tore along the streets shrieking and moaning like some maddened demon.

Sir Harold Wynde and Mr. Atkins looked at each other, and then both glanced at the clock.

It was upon the stroke of twelve.

"A late hour for a call," said the baronet, uneasily. "I have no wish to be seen, Atkins. I am in no mood to encounter a possible client of yours."

The knock sounded again, in a lull of the storm, low, secret, and imperative.

Atkins's face brightened up with sudden relief and joy.

"I know that knock," he said. "Please step into the inner office, Sir Harold. You shall see no one but friends to-night."

He opened the door of the small, dark inner office, and Sir Harold passed in and stood in the darkness, leaving the door slightly ajar.

Atkins hastened to open the outer door.

A gust of wind swept fiercely in, and with it, as if impelled by it, a man hurried into the office, and closed the door with both his hands.

He was slender, but so muffled in coat collar and cap that no one could have guessed his identity.

"Lord Towyn?" said Atkins, doubtfully.

The new comer took off his cap and turned down his collar.

The lawyer's instinct had not deceived him. The noble face, the bright blue eyes so full of warmth and glow, the tawny moustache, and the golden hair above a grand forehead—all these, now displayed to the solicitor's gaze, were the features of Neva's favoured lover.

But the young earl looked pale and worn by anxieties, and although now there was a glow of brightness and eagerness in his face and manner yet one could see in all his features the traces of great and recent suffering.

"Alone, Atkins?" he exclaimed, extending his hand, while he swept a quick glance about the room. "I am glad to have found you up, but had you gone to sleep I must have awakened you. I have just received important news by messenger, who routed me up at my hotel. I came to you as soon as I could—"

"If the news is unpleasant do not tell it just yet," said Atkins, agitatedly, with a glance at the inner room. "I have news, too, Lord Towyn. Come to the fire. Bless us, how the wind howls!"

The young earl removed his great-coat and advanced to the fire, and Atkins went into the inner office.

The sound of whispering followed.

Lord Towyn heard the sound and started, and at the same moment his glance fell upon Sir Harold Wynde's cast-off great-coat and hat.

Presently Atkins returned, rubbing his hands together with excitement.

"You are not alone, I see," said the young earl.

"I will see you again, Atkins—"

"Stay, my lord," said the solicitor. "I have news, great news to impart to you. Let me communicate mine first. Can you bear a great surprise—a shock?"

"You have heard from Miss Wynde?" cried Lord Towyn. "You have later news even than mine? Speak, Atkins. Those villains have not succeeded in forcing her into a marriage with young Black? It is not that—say that it is not."

"It is not that, my lord. How am I to tell you the startling news I have just learned? My lord, I have had a visit to-night from a gentleman who has just returned from India. He knew Sir Harold Wynde well, and came to give me all the particulars of Sir Harold's supposed death!"

"Supposed death? How strangely you choose your words, Atkins. Supposed death?"

"Yes, my lord," cried Atkins, trembling and eager. "We have all mourned Sir Harold as dead. And this gentleman says—prepare for a surprise, my lord—he says that Sir Harold Wynde still lives!"

The young earl started, and grew white.

"It is impossible!" he ejaculated. "He lives? It is preposterous! Atkins, you are the sport of some impostor!"

"No, no, my lord—I believe it; I believe that Sir Harold lives!"

"Have you forgotten the letter of Surgeon Graham, giving a circumstantial and minute account of Sir Harold's death?" demanded Lord Towyn. "If Sir Harold had survived his encounter with the tiger would he not have returned home over a year ago?"

"The—the gentleman who gave me the particulars of Sir Harold's fate," said Atkins, full of suppressed excitement, "says that the baronet was unfortunate enough to incur the enmity of his Hindoo servant, who secretly vowed revenge. Sir Harold actually encountered the tiger, as was said, but a shot from the servant frightened the beast, and he fled back into the jungle. Sir Harold was wounded and bleeding, and his horse was killed. The Hindoo servant picked up his disabled master, and, instead of taking him back to Major Archer's bungalow, he carried him forward, and gave him into the hands of some of his own friends and country people, and these friends of the Hindoo carried off Sir Harold farther into the hill country, to their home—a sort of mountain fastness. They kept him there closely imprisoned, and, while we mourned our friend as dead, he was chained in a cell but little better than a dungeon."

Lord Towyn still looked incredulous.

"How did the bearer of this singular tale discover these strange facts, if facts they are?" he demanded. "I should like to see this gentleman from India, and question him—"

He paused as the door of the inner room opened, and Sir Harold Wynde, pale and haggard, came into the outer office.

Lord Towyn uttered a strange cry, and sprang backward, his face whitening to deathliness.

Sir Harold approached the young man, extending his hand.

"Behold 'the gentleman from India,'" he said, faintly smiling. "My dear boy, ask me as many questions as you like. Don't you know me, Arthur, that you stare at me so? I am no ghost, although our friend Atkins took me for one."

Another cry, but this time a cry of rapture, broke from the young earl's lips. He bounded forward and clasped Sir Harold's hands in his, and both were silent with an emotion too mighty for speech.

Atkins turned aside to add fresh fuel to the blazing fire, his own features working.

"Sir Harold! Oh, Sir Harold!" cried Lord Towyn, at last, in a very ecstasy of gladness. "What a joy this will be to my poor little Neva! She has mourned for you as dead, and I have thought that the shadow of your supposed fate would darken all her life. How glad she will be, my poor little girl!"

"Your little girl?" said Sir Harold.

Lord Towyn's fair face flushed.

"I love Neva, and she loves me," he said, frankly. "She has promised to marry me, and I hope, Sir Harold, that you retain your former good opinion of me, and will sanction our union."

"We will see," said the baronet, pressing the young earl's hand warmly. "It has always been my desire, as it was that of your father, to unite my family to yours. Your face tells me that you have fulfilled the glorious promise of your boyhood. If Neva consent to marry you, my dear Arthur, I shall not refuse my consent."

Lord Towyn looked his delight, and then cast a quick, inquiring glance at Atkins.

"Does Sir Harold know?" he asked, significantly.

"I have told him," answered the solicitor, "that Miss Wynde has disappeared in the most mysterious manner, and that she is in the power of a couple of adventurers—"

Sir Harold interrupted Atkins by a passionate gesture.

"Arthur," exclaimed the baronet, his proud face drawn with pain, "Atkins tells me that I have been deceived in—in Lady Wynde, and that he has discovered her to be an adventuress, unscrupulous and unprincipled. Is this his prejudice? I cannot give implicit credence to it."

"It is Heaven's truth, Sir Harold," said Lord Towyn, solemnly, holding the baronet's hand in a strong, firm pressure. "It is better that you should know the truth from us than hear it from strangers, or be farther deceived by the woman you made your wife. Lady Wynde is an adventuress, bold and false and wicked."

"You forget that I knew her history even back to her childhood," cried Sir Harold, eagerly. "I did not marry her with my eyes blind-folded. She never attempted to impose herself upon me as other than she was. She made known her whole life to me. She was the daughter of a naval officer, and the niece of Mrs. Hyde, a lady of good family and posi-

tion, who lives a very retired life in Bloomsbury square, London. We ate our wedding breakfast in Mrs. Hyde's house. Lady Wynde's first husband was the Honourable Charles Hathaway, the younger son of a viscount. Lady Wynde's family connexions both by birth and marriage are excellent. I knew all this beyond a doubt before I married her. Yet you call her an adventuress!"

"So she was, Sir Harold," exclaimed Atkins. "Her past life, her family and her connexions were all you say. Her record was all fair. Not a word had ever been whispered against her reputation, and she went into the best society, and had admirers and suitors. All this I grant. But she was none the less an adventuress at heart."

"She had an income of three hundred pounds a year and spent a thousand, begged from relatives, or given her by Craven Black from his winnings at the gaming-table or at the races."

"She was engaged to marry Craven Black soon after Mr. Hathaway's death and before her marriage with you. Mrs. Hyde is not over fond of her niece, and told me this fact herself."

"This marriage, owing to the meagre fixed income of the pair, was deferred, and finally they conceived the idea that Mrs. Hathaway should contract a wealthy marriage, secure a comfortable jointure, become a widow, and then marry Craven Black."

"There can be no doubt that your marriage with Mrs. Hathaway was the result of a conspiracy against you by these two villains, male and female—that they had set a trap for you, Sir Harold, and that you fell into it!"

Sir Harold turned his haggard eyes upon Lord Towyn.

"It is true," said the young earl, full of the tenderest sympathy. "You were imposed upon, Sir Harold. The woman you married, so fair and spotless in seeming, was like some fair fruit with a worm at its core. There are adventuresses in good society, of good birth and spotless reputations, as there are well-born adventurers. Mr. Atkins is right. Craven Black and Mrs. Hathaway have played a daring game, but they have not yet won. This is a terrible stroke to you, dear Sir Harold; but bear it bravely. You are not desolate because Lady Wynde feigned a love for you, and has proved false and wicked. You have the holy memories of your first wife to keep pure and steadfast your faith in woman. You have Neva to love you. You have your friends."

But Sir Harold threw up his arms with a gesture of despair.

"I loved her!" he said, brokenly. "I have thought of her in my Indian dungeon, and on the lonely sea, and have planned how to break to her the news of my return tenderly and gently, that her reason might be spared a shock which I feared might destroy it. And, oh, Heaven! all the while she never loved me! While I thought of her upon the deck, with longings for wings, that I might sooner reach her, she was the wife of another, and exulted in the thought that she was rid of me for ever! Ah, this is a dreary coming home!"

"It is, Sir Harold," said Lord Towyn, sorrowfully; "but the wickedness of one person whom you have loved need not darken your life or paralyze your energies. Neva is in peril. Rouse yourself from this great grief for her sake. Think what joy your return will be to her. We must find her and save her."

The young earl had touched the right cord. Sir Harold aroused himself from his despair and said:

"Yes, we must find her and save her. But where are we to look for her? If the detectives have failed to find a clue to her whereabouts how are we to succeed?"

"I have been upon the Continent," said Lord Towyn, "and have travelled from one end of England to the other; I have been upon a score of false tracks, and failed to find a trace of those I sought. I have now been three or four days in this town, consulting every day with Atkins or Sir John Freise, while the detectives continued the search. To-night I have received news which for the first time gives me hope that we are nearing the end. A messenger sent by one of my detectives came to me by the last down train from London, with a report of discoveries."

"They have been found?" cried Sir Harold, eagerly.

"Not yet. The object of Craven Black and his wife—I hardly know what to call her, Sir Harold—was to marry Neva to Black's son, and so obtain control over the Hawkhurst property," said Lord Towyn. "It is to effect this marriage that Craven Black and his wife are engaged in persecuting Neva. When they quitted Hawkhurst they left Rufus Black behind them. It occurred to me that when they should deem matters in a fair state of progress, or when Neva showed signs of relenting, they would send for Rufus to come and plead his cause, or to marry her, wherever they might be. I therefore hired a detective to watch

Rufus, and it is from this detective, not from those in search of Neva, that I have to-night heard."

"What does he say?" demanded Atkins, breathlessly.

Young Black has remained at Hawkhurst ever since the marriage—some five weeks. Two or three days ago he went up to London. The detective, who has been stopping at Wyndham as a commercial traveller in broken health, went up by the same train. It seemed at first, my messenger says, as if young Black had had no object beyond a day's saunter in town. He visited picture-shops and so on, but that night he went to the Great Northern railway station, and found the train gone. That movement of his, as the detective said, began to look like business. Black went to his hotel, the detective still on his track. The next morning young Black sold his watch and chain, and the next evening he was off again to the Great Northern railway station. He caught the night express and went by it, the detective in the same train. The detective sent a note from Edinburgh to a fellow officer, who brought it to me to-night. I am convinced that Rufus Black has gone to rejoin his father, and that if we follow him we shall find Neva."

"To what place did he book himself?" asked Atkins.

"To Inverness. It is plain that while the Blacks tried to persuade us that they were upon the Continent they were safely hidden with Neva in the Scottish Highlands. They may have gone thither from some idea of bringing about an informal Scottish marriage between Neva and young Black. Neva can know nothing of the marriage laws of Scotland, where a declaration from a woman that a certain man is her husband, when he hears and does not contradict the assertion, and *vice versa*, constitutes a legal and binding marriage. The Blacks may calculate upon Neva's ignorance, and hope to avail themselves of the facilities of Scottish law in marrying her to Rufus."

"It is very probable," said Atkins, knitting his brows.

"Young Black has the start of us. He must have arrived at Inverness to-day. I came here to propose, Atkins, that we start for the north by the earliest morning train. We are on the right track now," said Lord Towyn. "Let us follow it up promptly."

"We will go in the morning," declared Atkins.

"I shall go also," said Sir Harold. "Let the secret of my return be kept a secret still. I do not wish to warn this Craven Black, or put him on his guard. Call me Mr. Haulow. It is the name I travelled home under. Be careful not to betray my secret until I myself declare it."

The three sat together by the office fire all the remainder of the night and talked. In the morning Atkins wrote a note to his wife, and another to his clerks, and, leaving the notes upon his desk, went out with his two guests before the family were astir. Sir Harold muffled his face beyond recognition, and conducted Lord Towyn and Atkins to his hotel. Here they were served with breakfast, and soon after they proceeded to the station, and took the train for London.

Sir Harold breathed more freely when they had left the cathedral town behind them. He was well known in Canterbury, and with a strange, nervous shrinking he dreaded recognition before he should choose to make his return known.

On arriving in London the three pursuers hastened to the Great Northern railway station, and an hour later they were on their way to Scotland, upon the track of Rufus Black.

CHAPTER XLIV.

UPON the day after the storm a high wind still prevailed. No sailing vessel dared put out to sea from Inverness. The sky was dun and gray, with now and then a fitful gleam of sickly yellowish sunlight. The black waters were all alive with "white caps," and the sullen roar of the waves, as they hurled themselves against the cliffs upon whose summit stood the house of Heather Hills, filled the air with its monotonous tumult.

Lally Bird spent the morning in her own room, upon a sofa in a recessed window. Mrs. Peters came and went softly, bestowing pitying glances upon the round gipsy face lying so white and sorrowful against the cushions, but the dusky eyes were looking seaward with a strange, far-off, steadfast gaze, and it was evident that the young girl was not even conscious of the presence of her attendant.

At noon Mrs. Peters brought up a tray on which was spread a tempting luncheon of chocolate, hot rolls, delicate game birds, and jellies. She placed the tray upon a low table, and wheeled it beside the sofa. Still Lally did not stir.

"Miss Lally," cried the good woman, her lip quivering. "Are you not going to eat to-day? You had no breakfast. You will be ill. I know that I have

offended you beyond all forgiveness, and that my face must be unpleasant in your sight, but I would undo what I have done if I could. Better almost any kind of a marriage than to see you lying here looking so wan and hopeless. Oh, Miss Lally, if you would only speak to me!"

Lally turned her face slowly, with a look of surprise mingling with her expression of pain.

"Why, Peters," she said, kindly. "I did not know you were so troubled about me. I am not angry with you. You meant what you did for the best. There, don't cry, Peters. I am not angry; indeed, I am not. You are as much my friend as ever. Sit down by me, and we will eat our luncheon together."

Peters complied as soon as she could command her emotion, and Lally aroused herself to speak cheerfully, and to inquire concerning the results of the storm.

After the luncheon the young mistress of Heather Hills announced her intention of going out for a solitary walk. The wind was not so high as it had been in the morning, and Mrs. Peters did not venture any objections.

Lally attired herself in a bombazine walking-dress and Astrachan jacket, hat and muff, and about two o'clock she went out alone for a walk along the cliffs.

For an hour or more she rambled on, stepping now and then to rest, and keeping near the sea, over whose wide, wild waters her gaze strayed and fixed itself with singular steadfastness. At last she sat down upon a great boulder, and the slender black figure was outlined against the gray sky with startling distinctness.

Before her lay the wild and restless sea, behind her the undulating fields of her new domain. At one side of her, in the gray distance, was the house of Heather Hills, and on the other hand, and nearer, was the low range of heath-clad hills which gave the estate its name.

It was a lonely spot, that upon which she had paused to rest, with a bold bluff surmounted by a very chaos of rocks, upon whose summit she had perched herself. A few sea-gulls were screaming in the air, but besides them and the wild birds on the heath there was no sign of life, far or near.

An hour passed. The wind still blew strong and fierce, tugging at her hat and garments with strong, despoiling hands. Her veil was swept over the bluff into the abyss of waters, and her hair was torn from its confining braids, and tumbled over her shoulders in a dusky cascade. But still Lally sat high up upon the rocky mass, paying no heed to wind or murmur of wave, her soul being busy with the great problem of her destiny.

So, looking seaward with great, longing eyes, she did not see a human figure coming towards her over the fields. It came nearer and nearer—the figure of Rufus Black!

The young man had gone back to Inverness upon the previous night, but he had not been content to accept his dismissal at the hands of Mrs. Peters. His old love for Lally was strong and fierce, and he was determined to win back his lost young wife, if energy and patience and love and sincere repentance could accomplish it. So, after a sleepless night, and a morning spent in indecision and irresolution, he had come out again to Heather Hills. Mrs. Peters was in her own room, and the housemaid had answered his knock.

Rufus had inquired for Miss Bird, but the housemaid had never heard the name. He then asked for Mrs. Black. That name was also unknown at Heather Hills.

In this dilemma, believing Lally to be at the hills as a companion to Miss Wroat, and thinking she might have taken a new name as a disguise, he boldly asked for Miss Wroat, determined to see Lally's supposed employer, and to entreat her to intercede in his behalf with Lally.

The housemaid had told him that Miss Wroat had gone out for a walk, indicating the direction, and, calling up all his courage, Rufus had started in pursuit.

He saw the dark and slender figure perched on the rocks while yet afar off. Something in its droop reminded him of Lally, and he came on at a swinging pace, his eager gaze never averting from her; and, as he came nearer and yet nearer, the conviction stole upon him that it was Lally herself at whom he looked.

"She must have come out with Miss Wroat," he thought. "Rich ladies never walk without an attendant. She has dropped behind, being tired. It is Lally! it is—it is!"

He came up swiftly, the damp soil deadening the sound of his footsteps. He gained the rocks, and began to climb them to Lally's side, but the girl did not stir or notice his approach.

A sudden sound at her side at last startled her. With a quick exclamation she turned her head, and beheld him!

She did not speak, but her great black eyes expanded, and her face grew suddenly so deathly white that he thought she must be fainting.

"Lally! oh, Lally!" he cried to her, in an anguished, broken voice. "Thank Heaven, I have found you! Oh, my darling, my little wife, whom I have mourned as dead!"

He knelt down before her, in the shadow of a projecting rock, the tears streaming over his face, and his eyes regarding her in wild imploring.

So a devotee might have knelt to his patron saint, feeling unworthy to approach her, but longing and praying with his whole soul for forgiveness and mercy.

Lally felt her heart melt within her.

"Oh, Rufus," she gasped, in a choking whisper.

He put up his arms to enfold her. She shrank back, not with loathing, but with a sudden dignity, a sort of majesty, that awed him.

"You must not touch me, Rufus," she commanded. "I am not your wife!"

"You are! you are! Before Heaven I declare that you are my wife!"

"Hush, Rufus! You wrote to me that I was not your wife. Don't you remember? You said that our marriage was a null and void."

"I thought it was. My father told me so!" cried Rufus.

"Oh, Lally, I have been a poor, weak-souled idiot. I am not worthy of your love. I should have stood by you, instead of basely deserting you through my own personal cowardice. My father threatened to have me indicted for perjury in swearing that we were of age at the time of our marriage, and I—I was afraid. You can never respect me, Lally, or love me again, I know, but if you knew how I have suffered you would pity me."

"I have always pitied you," she murmured.

"I thought you dead. I saw your poor, mutilated, drowned body in my dreams. Day and night it haunted me. I was nearly beside myself. I thought I should go mad. My father's mind was set upon my marriage with a great Kentish heiress, who loved another than me. I appealed to her to save me—to save me from my anguish, torture, and remorse, produced by continual thoughts of you! I had no heart to give her. I was base and unmanly in offering her the dregs of the cup that had been filled for you; but, oh, Lally, I was half mad and wholly despairing! I wanted the love of some good woman to interpose and save me from going to perdition."

"I heard your offer of marriage to her," said Lally. "And you are engaged to marry her?"

"No; she refused me. I am free, Lally, and I thank Heaven for it. What should I have done if I had married her and then discovered that you still live? I love you and you alone in the whole world. I am of age and my own master. I have thrown off the shackles my father has kept upon me. I mean to be brave and honest and true henceforward. I mean to be a man, Lally, in the best and noblest sense of the word. It shall never be said again of me that I am 'unstable as water,' or that I am a coward. Lally, I offer you a second marriage, which no one can contest. Will you forgive me, and take me back?"

His words found echo in Lally's heart, but she did not speak. Her pallor gave place to a sudden rose stain, and she began to tremble.

"I came to-day to entreat Miss Wroat to intercede with you for me," said Rufus, becoming alarmed at her silence. "I have not a fine home to offer you such as Miss Wroat gives you, but I will work for you, Lally. I will make myself a great painter for your sake. Those worthless daubs I painted at New Brompton belong to the past life. Henceforward I will paint better pictures, and show there is something in me. We will have two cozy rooms somewhere in the London suburbs, and you shall have a sunny window for flowers, and I will work for you, and you shall never know want or misery again. I can do anything with and for you, Lally, but if left to stand by myself I shall surely fall. Lally, little wife, take me back!"

He crept up nearer to her and held out his arms. She crept into them like a weary child.

She might justly have reproached him for his weakness and cowardice, and have taunted him with having courted the heiress of Hawkhurst, but she did neither. She nestled in his arms, and looked up at him with great, tender eyes full of sweet compassion and love, and offered him her lips to kiss!

So they were reunited.

For a while they sat in silence, their hearts too full for words. Then Rufus Black reverently touched her black garments, and asked, simply:

"Are these worn for me?"

Lally shook her head.

"For the lost love and vanished trust?" he asked.

"Yes, I see. But, my wife, if you will love and trust me again I will try to make your life all rose colour. Poor little wife! How you have suffered!"

I know the whole story from Miss Wroat. When I called at the house yonder last evening and asked for you as Mrs. Peters a tall, bony woman who stood in the hall came forward and said she was Mrs. Peters. I was completely mystified, for I had decided in my own mind that you were known here as Mrs. Peters, but I now see how it is. The old lady knows your story and was angry at me, and called herself Mrs. Peters to throw me off your track. She told me all your adventures since we parted. And now, little wife, let us seek your employer and tell her that you have taken me back, and that we are to be married to-morrow morning at Inverness."

"So soon, Rufus?"

"Yes. I mean to make you mine in a new bond that no one can contest. I have never taken steps to have our first marriage set aside, and I think it still stands. But we will be married quietly to-morrow morning in a Presbyterian church, and we can be so married without a licence or publication of bans. May I take you to church to-morrow, little wife?"

"Yes," said Lally, softly. "Oh, Rufus, I do think you are going to be strong and brave and true henceforward, and if so I shall not regret what I have suffered. It has been very bitter," and she shuddered; "but Heaven is very good to us at the last. I will try and be a good wife, and to strengthen and uphold you."

"You were always a good wife to me," sobbed Rufus, with a sudden remembrance of her gentleness, her tenderness, her strong trust in him, and her resolute faith that he would some day achieve honours and wealth. "Oh, Lally, I am not worthy to touch the hem of your garments, but for your sake I will be a man."

Lally stroked his cheek softly, as she had been wont to do in the long-ago at the dingy lodgings at New Brompton.

"My poor boy!" she whispered, yearningly. "My poor, dear boy!"

"Shall we go now in search of Miss Wroat?" asked Rufus, drying his eyes. "I do not see her on the shore. I own I am afraid to meet her, Lally. It's a remnant of the old cowardice, you see. But last night, when she told me your pitiful story, I quailed before her. She must despise me, and she will surely try to persuade you to cast me off."

"My poor Rufus!" said Lally, with a gay, sweet smile, such as had not visited her roguish mouth since the blight had fallen on her life. "Mrs. Peters is harsh in seeming, but her heart is true and tender. She loves me dearly, and I love her more as a friend than as a mistress. One thing we must understand, Rufus, and Lally's gaiety increased, "I can't part with dear old Peters."

Rufus looked aghast.

"You—you won't marry me then?" he gasped.

"Yes, Rufus; but I must keep Peters. She won't leave me; and, besides, it was but yesterday I thought her the only friend I had in the world."

"Her name is Peters, then?" said Rufus, bewildered. "I traced you two up from London under the names of Miss Wroat and Mrs. Peters. I didn't notice a third name as belonging to the party. By what name are you known here then, Lally?"

"As Miss Wroat, dear."

Rufus looked his amazement.

"I—I don't understand," he said, helplessly. "They said that Miss Wroat was an eccentric old lady, who was rich, and odd as Dick's hatband. Has she adopted you?"

"Do you remember, Rufus, that last morning we spent together at New Brompton?" said Lally, gravely. "I told you then that I had no relative living except a great-aunt, an old lady who lived in London, and who was rich, but whose name I did not know. That aunt I afterwards discovered. Her name was Mrs. Wroat. She was an eccentric old lady, but good and sweet at heart, and I loved her. She is dead, and it is for her I wear mourning."

Rufus looked open-eyed astonishment.

"That is not all," said Lally. "I took my aunt's name at her death, at her request. She made me her heiress. I am the owner of the town house in Mount Street, and of the estate of Heather Hills, and have besides fifty thousand pounds safely invested, so that I have an income of about three thousand pounds a year."

Rufus's arms dropped from his wife's waist.

"An heiress!" he muttered. "I have dared to dream that you would take me back? An heiress! A trifle of money will set you free, Lally, from any marriage claims, and you can marry according to your new position. I do not wonder that Mrs. Peters turned me out of your house, a poor, good-for-nothing coward, unfit even to address you. An heiress! Oh, Heaven! The word is like a two-edged sword between us!"

He moved backwards, white and trembling.

A mischievous gleam shot from Lally's gipsy eyes. "I have known so much of poverty," she said,

"that I should like to keep this wealth. It would make a good basis to build upon. But if it is 'like a two-edged sword between us' I suppose I can endow some already rich hospital with it, or give it to Peters, or send it to the heathen."

"You don't mean, Lally," cried Rufus, all agitation, "that you, a rich lady, will stoop from your high estate and marry me, and try to make something of me?"

"I do mean just that!" cried Lally, with spirit.

"For you know, Rufus, I—I love you!"

Rufus was at her side again in an instant.

The hour wore on, and the early dusk of the gathering evening fell around the reunited lovers.

Lally started at last, crying out:

"How dark it grows! It must be five o'clock, and Mrs. Peters will be distracted about me. I don't know as it is just etiquette, Rufus, but the circumstances are peculiar, and I don't believe that Mrs. Grundy has laid down any rule to fit the precise case, and the situation is so remote, and I don't believe anybody will know or care; and so—and so I'll invite you to remain to dine with me. But at an early hour—by ten o'clock, mind—you must start for Inverness."

"And you will meet me there at eleven o'clock in the morning, at the kirk, little wife?"

"Yes," said Lally, solemnly, and with a holy joy in her black eyes, "I will be there. Who shall part us now, Rufus?"

(To be continued.)

THE NEW ACT ON DEANS AND CANONS.—The Act of Parliament to facilitate the resignation of deans and canons has been printed. It received the royal assent on the 13th ult., and provides that any dean or canon, by reason of age, or any mental or bodily incapacity, may resign, if permanently incapacitated from the due performance of his duty. There are eight sections in the statute to carry out the intention of the legislature. On a representation to a bishop a certificate, after inquiry, can be forwarded to Her Majesty or the body corporate exercising the patronage. One-third of the income is to be set aside for the person resigning. There are special provisions as to deans and canons of unsound mind, and by the present law facilities are afforded for resignations of the offices mentioned.

A COURTEOUS WILL.—The *Gaulois* gives the following:—"A Capuchin monk, well known in the Faubourg St. Jacques, where he fed nearly 100 poor persons by alms collected by him in the Faubourg St. Germain, has just died, leaving as his whole inheritance his breviary, frock, cord, a volume by M. Thiers, and a wallet. Among his papers was found the following singular will: 'I bequeath, 1st, to the Abbé Michaud my breviary, because he does not know his own; 2nd, to M. Jules Favre my frock, to hide his shame; 3rd, to M. Gambetta my cord, which will prove useful one day round his neck; 4th, to M. Thiers his own work, that he may read it over again; and, 5th, to France my wallet, because she may shortly have occasion for one to collect alms.'"

THE PARIS SALON.—The exhibition of modern works of art, although not of half the usual extent, and not above the average in point of quality, is more attractive this year than it has ever been. The number of visitors to the present time, as compared with 1870, shows an excess of at least a tenth. This is only to be accounted for in two ways; in the first place, there was no Salon last year; and in the second, there are now two free days per week, Sunday and Thursday, in place of the one day of former years. The attractions of the exhibition are just now enhanced by the opening, in what is called the nave of the Palais de l'Industrie—converted into a garden and sculpture exhibition—of the annual floral show of the Central Society of Horticulture of France, which includes not only flowering plants, ornamental shrubs, and coniferous plants, but also gardening and horticultural fittings, tools, and implements.

GOLD IN OLD CROWNS AND HALF-CROWNS.—The Deputy Master of the Mint, in his report for the year 1871, supplies the following curious information:—"As is well known, silver, when extracted from its ores, usually contains a small quantity of gold, and the process of refining, as practised when the coins in question were struck, was too expensive to admit of the extraction at a profit of the small quantity contained in them. At the present day however improvements in refining render it possible to extract with profit any quantity of gold exceeding two grains in the pound troy of silver. Samples examined in the Mint prove that the half-crowns now in process of withdrawal from circulation contain an average of 4.97 grains in the pound, and when therefore any considerable quantity of these coins has accumulated in the Mint it will probably be advisable to recommend that the gold should be extracted from them before they are recoined."



[MISCHIEF.]

IN THE DARK.

"I know a maiden fair to see,
Take care! take care!"

sang Lily Esmond, while Lovel King stood beside the piano. Lily was very pretty; a thorough flirt by nature and education. She looked slyly out of the corners of her large blue eyes at Mr. King while she sang her song.

"Do you mean to begin our acquaintance with a warning, Miss Esmond?" he asked, with a serious smile, when she had done.

"This is not the beginning of our acquaintance," said Lily, dropping her eyes upon her little white hands, which kept straying up and down the keyboard, making random variations upon the air of her song. "I have known you for some time by reputation, Mr. King. As to the rest, forewarned is forearmed, you remember;" and she folded her hands and looked up into the gentleman's face with artful artlessness.

"Forewarned is forearmed," he repeated, with his same serious smile; "was that maxim a part of your graduating course, Miss Lily?"

"Pray don't begin to talk school, Mr. King. I am heartily tired of graduation and everything connected with it;" and she whirled herself around pettishly upon the piano stool.

"You are not going yet, are you?" he asked. "Pray sing something more."

"What for?"

"Oh, for my instruction, for instance."

Lily had no intention of leaving the piano just at present. She was enjoying her *tête-à-tête* too well; partly because Lovel King was a very agreeable and desirable man, partly because attention was a necessity to Miss Lily, but chiefly because, looking through from the front parlour to the sitting-room beyond, at the centre-table, on which were the bronze figure of a shaded lamp and a little inlaid open work-box, she could see Deborah, marble-white, with a

strange contraction about the corners of her mouth, going on with her work as if life and death were involved in the embroidery of her monogram.

"Your instruction!" echoed Lily, after her swift glance. "On what subject could such a little ignoramus as I give you any instruction, Mr. King?"

"You began to instruct me on a very interesting subject—yourself," he replied.

"I exhausted that subject in one song," she answered, lightly. "You will have to choose some other."

"Shall I? Tell me, then, what you meant by saying that you knew me already by reputation?"

"I meant just what I said. Deborah's letters have resounded with—"

She paused abruptly, facing the piano again.

"With what?"

"Oh, her opinions!"

"Of me?"

"Yes, sir."

"I wish I knew what they were."

"Then why don't you find out?"

Lily's fingers, which had been emitting little trills and runs during this conversation, sped suddenly into the intricacies of a dashing galop, and left her listener to digest her inquiry. It was a more significant one than she dreamed.

As she finished the galop in fine style Mr. King bowed a profusion of thanks, and walked away towards the lamp, the work-box, and Deborah.

Deborah did not look up, but a bright red spot burned in each cheek as he watched her for a moment, thinking what different faces the two girls had. Lily's with its fascinating prettiness, its intrigue and its affectation, all flash and sparkle, and Deborah's, dark, with a certain haughty strength, reserved, except for what it could not conceal—its soul. He had known Deborah during six months, yet he felt he could not begin to understand her. He had known Lily for an hour, and he comprehended her perfectly—"a wily

Vivien." These were the thoughts with which he stood and waited for the elder Miss Esmond to raise her eyes.

She did not raise them. She dare not. She knew they would tell Lovel King the jealous agony she had suffered while he hung over her half-sister at the piano. Poor Deborah had learned one lesson effectually, and that was to conceal her emotions.

"You are very much absorbed in your work to-night," he said, finally, in that rich, musical tone which always wins its way to the hearts of women. "Are those dainty stitches intended for some unconverted Polynesian or only a home missionary?"

She spread her work out, silent and simply scornful at the thrust. It was a handkerchief for Lily. She was embroidering her monogram in the corner. Mr. King looked at it with sudden curiosity.

"I don't know that I ever before heard of any one being branded with such initials. What is your sister's name?" he asked.

"Lily Isabel. What do you mean?"

"Is it possible that you have never remarked her initials? They are L. I. E."

Deborah turned pale. It was strange that she had never thought of this, often as she had marked and worked Lily's name.

"What nice taste and skill you have," pursued Mr. King, changing the subject. "But it ought to be put to some better use than needlework."

"He is wishing, I suppose, that I could play or sing," thought Deborah. "I might, if Mrs. Esmond had not seen fit to make me a nurse and sempstress and upper servant, instead of bringing me up as became my father's daughter." But she said aloud, almost fiercely, "Wherefore, Mr. King? I despise flimsy accomplishments."

Unconsciously her eyes turned toward the piano, where Lily was still playing. Her glance made her speech sound ill-natured. She did not care. Since her first recollection, for she was less than three years older than Lily, she had been goaded by the chorus of Lily's perfections—her beauty, her amiability, in contrast to her own gusty temper and tawny face. Lily was always neat, with emaculate apron and crimped blonde hair; Deborah always outgrowing everything, shorn till she was fourteen, studiously repressed, frequently sullen, and realizing passionately her own short-comings.

Mr. Esmond was a man of business, and left the management of the girls to his wife, who for aught he saw was strictly impartial.

Deborah was very trying, always at fault. It made no great difference to poor Deborah when her father died. It took little or nothing from her lonesome life. She had new clothes for mourning, about the first she ever remembered which fitted her. Then shortly one of the servants was dismissed.

Mrs. Esmond talked a good deal about economy, and in a few months after the funeral Lily was sent away for two years to school. Those years were, on the whole, the happiest Deborah had known. Mrs. Esmond no longer presumed to control and dictate to her as to a child; Lily, whose tormenting temper and perfect antagonism made her like another being, was away. She followed her own pursuits; read eagerly, found associates, and matured into a sort of beauty which no one had suspected possible to her face and form.

Mrs. Esmond, who seldom acted without a definite end in view, had her object in loosening the tight reins she had hitherto held upon her step-daughter. She had always supposed during her husband's lifetime that in case of his death a handsome property would be left mostly within her own control. To her extreme chagrin, when his will was opened it was found that most of his business capital was the fortune belonging to his first wife, and this was secured to her daughter. What remained was bequeathed to the present Mrs. Esmond; but this amount was so small that it would scarcely enable herself and Lily to live with comfort.

To exchange her present style for something akin to poverty before Lily should be settled in life was more bitter than wormwood to Mrs. Esmond. Her plan, therefore, was to keep Deborah as long as possible ignorant of the real state of affairs, to render her so contented that independence would not occur to her, and to secure an ambitious match for Lily at once.

With ill-controlled vexation she found Lovel King's attentions to Deborah becoming serious before Lily's return from school. Deborah's marriage would involve an investigation of her fortune, and the loss of its use, which Mrs. Esmond could ill afford.

Moreover, since the time that Lovel King first became a visitor at the house, Mrs. Esmond had conjectured that a marriage might be brought about between him and Lily. It would have suited her perfectly.

"Deborah has a beau," she said to her daughter,

in their first moments alone, the morning of Lily's arrival home. "She has two, for that matter. You will have to look to your laurels, or Deborah, after all, will pass for the beauty of the family."

It was on the strength of this taunt that Lily had made herself very lovely this evening for her first impression upon Lovel King, and had exhausted her small graceful arts to monopolize his conversation, and to take him off to the piano and keep him there. She did not leave him long, either, to Deborah alone. It was just as well, for there was a great gulf of silence after Deborah's last remark. It was too much for her to feel that Lily, who had overshadowed her happiness through childhood and girlhood, was to come again between her and her heart's desire.

Lily came fluttering into this gulf serene and talkative. It took the sting out of her mother's taunt to see Deborah wince.

Mr. King did not stay as late as usual that night. Three seemed to spoil the company. The girls sat silent for some time after he had left.

"Your Mr. King is quite nice, Deborah," said Lily, at last.

"He is not mine, Lily, that I am aware of."

"Aren't you engaged to him?"

"No."

Deborah wrought at the initials. Lily lay back in her easy-chair.

"I thought of course you must be," she said, in her old lazy, tormenting tone, "or he would not have flirted so with me to-night."

"I should like to know, Lily, where you consider that common civility ends and flirtation begins," said Deborah, hot with anger, crimson streaks flushing her face and throat.

"Should you? Well, just at the point where Mr. Lovel King left you to follow me into the front room."

"You asked him to criticize your singing."

"I didn't ask him to criticize me."

"Did he?"

Lily got up, swept her train into position, settled her bracelets:

"I know a maiden fair to see—

Take care! Take care!"

she sang, with a courtesy to stormy-faced Deborah.

"She has blue eyes and golden hair—

Beware! Beware!"

she sang on, and went and shut the piano.

"Let us go to bed, Deborah, or we shall lose our beauty-sleep."

"I intend to finish this handkerchief to-night," responded Deborah.

"Then I'll not wait for you," said Lily, and she went upstairs, trilling her song.

"Beware! Beware!"

fell upon Deborah's ear as the chamber door closed, and she sat still and rigid; her work dropped in her lap.

She could hardly understand the shock she had received. She had believed in Lovel King as she did in the sunshine; had no more thought that he could turn from her to say sweet things to any other woman than that midnight will come at noon. Was there no truth in what he had acted and looked?

Had he been trifling with her heart and her trust? She buried her face in her hands, and great hot tears plashed between her fingers and fell upon her work. She heard the hall door open, but did not stir, supposing Mrs. Esmond would, as usual, go direct to her room. A moment later she started at an approaching step, and confronted Mr. King.

"Didn't the pricking of your thumbs tell you something wicked this way comes?" he laughed. "I left my cane on the rack, and only meant to take it and be gone. Then, hearing all quiet, I fancied I might find you alone, and—Why, Deborah! What is the matter?"

He stood beside her and took her hand with the same touch and pressure which had thrilled her before. For a moment she thought she should appeal to his compassion, and beg him not to turn from her to Lily, as every one else did. But with a wild effort she kept the words back. She composed her face, and said, coldly:

"The matter? There is nothing the matter, Mr. King. I was trying to finish my needlework, despite your contempt for it. But it seems fated to remain undone till to-morrow."

"I could not be felt contempt for any work of yours, Deborah," he said, as if her temper grieved him.

"That is a negative sort of appreciation which hardly flatters me," she retorted.

"I don't know that any appreciation of mine could flatter you. You deserve so much better," and, not waiting for a reply, he added, "I have been taking tickets for the lecture course. You will go, will you not?"

"How many tickets are necessary for our admission?" she asked as he took out several and held them toward her.

"I took half a dozen. I thought you might all like to go."

Deborah's momentary pleasure went out. A week ago he would not have thought of providing for the family. It was evident—to Deborah—that he meant to secure Lily as one of the party.

"I am often busy on Friday evenings," she said, coolly; "you have provided against the necessity of going alone, so that it will not make much difference."

Alas, Deborah! She little knew what harm she was working with her sharp words. Lovel King had been dissatisfied with himself when he left her earlier in the evening; provoked that he had yielded to Lily's arts, and seemed to neglect Deborah. He had made a pretext to come back, guessing from the light in the chamber that Lily had retired, and hoping with a few words to set all right with Deborah. He knew to-night that he loved her, if he had never been sure of it before. It was in his heart and on his lips to tell her so. But she met him with a mood that, being a man, he could not understand, and they parted for the night, chafing mutually at the wedge which a little pair of fluttering white hands had forced between their hearts.

Lily, meanwhile, upstairs, was plotting mischief. She was not sleepy—not a bit. She only wanted to take off her dress and loosen her hair, and study attitudes before the glass. Now she was "Esmeralda," and she wondered if Lovel King danced well. Then she was the "Daughter of the Regiment," and she wished, as she marched up and down the room, clicking the heels of her little boots, and humming "Rataplan," that some one would give a costume party and let her show Mr. King how pretty she really was.

By-and-bye she heard Deborah coming, so she turned the gas down in haste. It was the kindest turn she could have done, for Deborah had cried by this time till concealment was out of the question.

Friday afternoon came, dolorous with mud and rain. The meeting of the sewing circle was on this day. Deborah would have been minded, ordinarily, failing to attend. But, for some inexplicable reason, she was seen at three o'clock arrayed in waterproof and overshoes, on her way to the meeting. Tea-time arrived, and she had not returned home.

"They are getting off a missionary box," remarked Mrs. Esmond, "and probably will not have the necessary work done before nine or ten o'clock."

"How will Deborah get home?" inquired her daughter.

"I presume young Wallace will see that she does not come alone," replied Mrs. Esmond.

"Is that Deborah's other beau?" inquired Lily.

"Deborah is quite diplomatic," Mrs. Esmond began; "she keeps a first-best and second-best escort. The Reverend Mr. Wallace answers nicely for sewing circles, but for other occasions—"

At this juncture the door-bell was rung, and the servant announced Mr. King.

"You will have to go in to see him, Lily, and tell him that Deborah is out."

Lily paused to set the blue velvet bow a little more aside, in her Pompadour roll, and to fluff her overskirt gently, then bore down upon Mr. King, who stood looking at a photograph album in an absent-minded, irritated way. He smoothed his frown, as became his breeding, and greeted Lily very courteously.

"Have you sufficient courage and a bonnet that will bear spoiling, Miss Lily, so that you may venture out to-night?"

"Out—where?" inquired Lily.

"Have you forgotten that this is lecture night?"

"I have not forgotten, for I never knew."

Lovel King's look of annoyance came back.

"Ah, then your sister did not—Isn't she in to-night, Miss Esmond?"

"Deborah has gone to the sewing-circle. You are quite incomprehensible, Mr. King."

"Am I? I beg your pardon, I believe I am. To begin at the beginning, I bought course-tickets for these lectures, thinking that you young ladies and also your brother and mother might like to attend. I mentioned the fact to Miss Deborah. Possibly she has forgotten all about it. Under the circumstances all that I can do is to extend my invitation and protection to you, at this late eleventh hour, and beg you to accept them."

"I will accept them with pleasure," she answered; and a little later Mr. King was on his way with her to the hall.

They passed Mrs. Crafts', where the sewing-circle met, and perhaps Deborah did really, as she fancied, hear their footsteps as she sewed tapes and bindings on to the unfinished garments that were to fill the missionary box. Many a good work gets wrought out of just such a mood as Deborah's. Her fingers flew, for her wild heart-ache would not let them rest.

It was plain to Deborah that Lovel King's attentions had had no serious meaning, or he would not have transferred them so readily. Self-blinded, she was utterly incapable of seeing that pride and indignation were completing what thoughtlessness on his part and too much temper on hers had begun.

Despite Deborah's energy, it was ten o'clock before the work was done. Mr. Wallace, as her step-mother had predicted, was glad of the opportunity to escort her home. He left her, however, at the door, and, entering the parlour, Deborah found Lily and Mr. King discussing the lecture and the lecturer with great animation. Mr. King had followed Lily in, it must be confessed, solely to discover if Deborah had yet returned, and to hear what she might have to say for herself. Deborah was smarting with annoyance, partly self-inflicted.

"You lost a great deal," said Lily, placidly.

"One's greatest loss is sometimes one's greatest gain," retorted Deborah, stinging, emerging from her waterproof with that moist, fresh bloom which the rain gives some people, and contrasting with Lily, whose hair was out of crimp, skirts dragged, and who looked as if she had faded with washing.

"I tried to enjoy it for both of us," said Lily, with a yawn.

"I am sorry you made such an exertion on my account," said Deborah.

"I didn't mean to say that I monopolized the enjoyment," replied Lily, blandly. "I suppose Mr. Wallace was at Mrs. Crafts'?"

"He is always at the sewing society."

"Quite tempting to young-lady members, isn't it?"

"That is just as one feels," said Deborah, and despite herself her colour heightened.

Lovel King was watching her with keen eyes. He rose and laid the unlucky tickets upon the table.

"I shall be obliged to go to London and remain there for a few weeks," he said, "before the next lecture is given. You must accept these, young ladies, and enjoy the lectures more than if I were here to inflict my presence as well as my invitation."

He looked steadily at Deborah, and walked towards the door. She was standing by the register and moved a step, on the impulse, to follow him into the hall, and let him see what was in her mind.

"Possibly," broke in Lily's silver voice, "we can get Mr. Wallace to supply your place; that would be charming—wouldn't it, Deborah?"

The annoyance increased in Mr. King's face. Deborah froze again. He said good-night curtly, and was gone.

Lily went upstairs to her mother's room.

"I have driven my wedge deep," she said, with a passion quite foreign to her voice. "I have parted them, and with the help of mother-wit I will keep them parted!"

Her cheeks flamed, her eyes sparkled.

"There are men in the world as good as Lovel King, Lily. You need not have been in such dead earnest about my jest," said Mrs. Esmond.

"Not for me," said Lily, responding to the first part of her mother's sentence.

On the day upon which Lovel King left town his office-boy delivered at Mrs. Esmond's door a letter addressed to Deborah. Lily had been watching for this all the week. She felt sure that it would come. She dared not open it, but she laid it on a pile of unused music where Deborah would never see it, and she "forgot" to mention its arrival. This letter was penned under strong excitement, and was hardly characteristic, but it was to the point, and would have straightened the tangled web without delay. Mr. King wrote as follows:

"DEBORAH,—I am quite in the dark concerning your suddenly changed manner towards me. If there is a reason for it which I can explain I shall expect to hear from you.—LOVEL KING."

Deborah never knew that this precious missive came. She too had watched day by day for some token till hope deferred made her heart sick, and she shut herself in a sort of proud despair. In Mr. King's absence the young minister, who really was an aspirant for Miss Esmond's hand, called frequently, and met with warm encouragement—from Lily and Mrs. Esmond.

Mrs. Esmond averred that she could not picture a more suitable match. She extolled Mr. Wallace till Deborah, in angry disgust, forbade her to mention his name, while she discontinued attending the sewing-circles.

The weeks of Mr. King's absence went by. One day Lily came in and announced his return.

"When did he come?" asked Deborah, sharply.

"Two days ago."

"Did you ask him?"

Deborah knew Lily's propensity for fiction *versus* fact.

"Certainly; I could hardly avoid it. He joined me, and walked with me to the door."

Deborah turned upon her sister such a burning, haggard look that it might have touched a heart of steel, but it slipped easily aside from Lily's invulnerable feelings.

Deborah went away by herself to think it over, and make sure that she did not exaggerate the worst. When she had satisfied herself that it was all over—that her dream had been a delusion—there crept over her cold, lonely heart an impulse that had come to it often through her miserable childhood—an impulse to run away!

She felt that somehow, somewhere there must be a chance for happiness in the world which she could never know situated as she was.

Mrs. Esmond's and Lily's influence was like a poisoned atmosphere. She knew they had granted her only oppression and dislike. It had been just so from infancy—Lily must have what she chose. She had taken her toys first, her books, her favourite bits of finery; now she had taken her lover.

Deborah sat on her chamber floor, her elbows upon the low broad window-sill, her face within her hands. The door opened slowly, and Lily came in as if with hesitation. She approached Deborah, stooped and kissed her cheek—a Judas kiss in truth.

"You won't mind, will you, dear?" she began, in her coaxing tones.

"Nothing that you can tell me, Lily."

"Mr. King asked me to take a drive with him tomorrow—that was all. I thought—I did not know, Deborah—whether you would just like it."

"I have nothing to do with your affairs. There is no necessity to consult me in the matter, Lily."

Deborah did not quite yield to her impulse to run away, but she studiously declared her intention of going on a visit to an old aunt of her mother's, whom she had never seen except at her father's funeral.

Mrs. Esmond generously told her she would give her five pounds for her expenses, or even a little more.

Deborah had seldom had a shilling to spend as she wished. She was almost touched by Mrs. Esmond's magnanimity; and, there being nothing to consider but her own impatience, she was on her way an hour before Mr. King brought his handsome phaeton to the door in fulfilment of his engagement with Lily.

They took a long drive, and on her return Lily, finding her mother away from home, took off her wraps, and curled up near the parlour register to warm and think.

It was quite dusk when she was startled by her mother's voice.

"Why, Lily, is this you asleep?"

"I believe so. Have you just come in?"

"Yes; we must have some lights. Are you alone?"

"Sit down for a few minutes. I want to talk. I was quite worn out. I slept so little last night. I was worried to death for fear Deborah would not get off. Her going was providential."

"Lily, I almost tremble at the part you are playing."

"Nonsense! With herout of the way everything is clear."

"But does he love you?"

"He will, of course. He will feel a trifle sore for a while, but I gave him something to cure his heart-ache to-day. I told him that Wallace had Deborah's affections, while he for a while had tempted her ambition. I let him understand that she was poor."

"That was dangerous ground. He can ascertain to the contrary. You must be very cautious, for, since matters have gone so far, everything depends upon your making this match, and speedily."

"Why speedily? Is there any need of undue haste?"

"Yes. Deborah will ascertain from her relatives the truth about her property. If she had had half your wit she would have known long ago. She will find out that it is her money which supports us. She might give me trouble about what is gone, but I do not think she will. She will, of course, though, at once assume control—she will be of age in a few days. You see the importance of having your engagement settled, if possible your marriage secured, before there is any exposure."

Lily shrugged her shoulders. The effect was lost, however, in the dark.

"Well," she remarked. "I shall be brilliant for the evening. Lord Lovell is coming to teach me chess—ha! ha! I think I could teach him something deeper. Shall I wear my corals or my Etruscan set with my black silk?"

"Your corals. Now hurry, and don't make us wait tea."

Mrs. Esmond and her daughter left the room and went their different ways.

As the sound of their footsteps ceased a man rose from near the piano and also left the room, in a dazed

way, with a staggering motion not attributable altogether to the darkness.

It was Lovel King.

In his hand he held the letter he himself had written to Deborah. He had discovered it, unopened, in a pile of music he was looking through, having come in and discovered Lily asleep. The finding of the letter had not fully aroused his suspicions. A careless servant might have received and forgotten it.

But the conversation to which he listened, in the dark, was a shock such as comes seldom to any; such as Mr. King himself, an earnest, honest man, had never pictured as possible among people of respectability.

Lily put on her black silk and her corals. She kept tea waiting of course, but she was so very pretty that no one thought of censuring her. Triumph, the memory of her exhilarating ride, the anticipation of fulfilling all she desired, gave her face an unusual dazzle.

But the evening passed along, and Lily sang and played and looked bewitching in vain. Mr. King did not come. He was engaged in a way she little suspected. When he left Mrs. Esmond's he paid a visit to the lawyer having charge of that lady's business matters, and discovered on inquiry what, but for Deborah's habit of submission to her step-mother, would have been generally known long before—that Mr. Esmond's estates amounted to about five thousand pounds. Of this four thousand were secured for his eldest daughter. The remainder, in addition to the homestead, to his widow and other children.

Mr. King happened to know that Deborah did all of her half-sister's sewing; that she had had none of the educational advantages which had been lavished upon Lily. He had observed that she wore no furs this January weather, while Lily had a set of ermine and another of sable. Men are always sensible to money wrongs. If Deborah could have had love Lily might have had still more furs and more music, but Mr. King thought of these material deprivations, and something like "shameful" and "atrocious" whistled through his teeth as he walked from the lawyer's home.

Then he began to consider how he, too, was involved in this Esmond intrigue. Lily, with her babyish beauty and seeming innocence, had resolved upon marrying him, or rather his fortune and position, whether he would or not; and, thinking over what she had already achieved in separating him from Deborah, he did not feel wholly sure but that she might accomplish it. He shuddered, strong man with a true heart as he was, at the thought of his escape from her meshes. But for his chance return after the drive, his habit of looking over whatever happened to be before him when waiting, a habit which directed him in the present instance to the pile of music which concealed his note, he might, as Lily intended, have become her husband. His eye chanced to fall upon a book upon his shelves—a copy of "Joseph and His Friend."

"I will send her this," he said, grimly, "as a parting gift!"

In his impatience he could hardly wait for another day to come that he might follow Deborah. He was not clear still that she loved him, but he found at least a cause for her coldness and irritation.

By the morning train he followed her to the house of her relative, which she had reached the preceding afternoon.

"Miss Esmond had gone for a walk," he was told, and the direction in which she went being indicated, he followed in pursuit.

It was a lovely midwinter day, and, following the long white road that went over the hill between the bare wintry woods, he caught sight of Deborah coming towards him with an air of laurel and pine. Her cheeks and eyes were brilliant with animation. He almost wished she did not look so happy.

She looked still happier, however, as she recognized him, and he felt reconciled.

"Deborah," he said, at once, "I have followed you to bring this letter, written and sent you nearly four weeks since. When you have answered its question I can explain, I think, the cause of its detention."

She broke the seal and read. Some of the stormy suffering of that evening when Lily sang her songs—some of the key certainty of Lovel King's indifference which followed—came into her heart there on the snowy hillside.

"In the dark?" she began; her red lip curled a little.

He laid his hand on hers.

"Let me speak first, Deborah. I have been 'in the dark' to some purpose since I wrote those lines. If you have ever cared for me, if—"

Her eyes met his. She knew there was no longer need to keep her heart secret to herself. She let Lovel King put his arm about her. The laurel and

holly and crimson berries which she treasured moment before slipped to the ground, and were left on the snow.

She heard his explanation almost in silence. There was no need to reflect upon Lily or her mother, now. She was beyond their power, and Deborah was generous. Her lover would not hear however, of trusting to any farther accidents. He insisted that their marriage should take place with all possible despatch, and they were united in the little church at the foot of the snow-clad hill whereon the reconciliation took place upon Deborah's twenty-first birthday.

Mrs. Esmond and Lily were not even invited to the wedding. They had cards however for the elegant reception which Mr. and Mrs. King gave upon their return home, and they accepted the same with smiling oblivion of what had passed.

A few weeks later Mrs. Esmond closed her house, and she and Lily went to London for the remainder of the winter. It was a desperate venture, with their now limited means, but such speculations are sometimes successful, and Lily was not destined to a second disappointment. She captivated a wealthy widower, who had either lost or won twice before in the matrimonial game.

Lovel King did actually send her a copy of "Joseph and His Friend" as a bridal gift. Lily never read it, so the point was lost. Deborah gave her a point-lace fan, which she found more reasonable.

Sitting alone together, sometimes, in their happy twilight, Deborah and her husband talk over their estrangement, and bless the clearing up of a mystery which came to them in the dark. W. H. P.

FACETIÆ.

A CONTRADICTION.—It was the observation of a foreign and puzzled spectator that a cricket match has only just commenced when it is all "over."—*Punch*.

A DEGREE OF COMPARISON.

Sweeper: "Hullo, Jim! What d'ye think o' er?"
Boardman: "Lor, she's verry nice! The exact image o' what my ole woman had used to be!"—*Fun*.

ROBERT MAY-CARN!—The reason why the Chancellor of the Exchequer objects to a new issue of silver coins is obvious enough. He doesn't want to bring the Bob into disrepute by making it too common.—*Fun*.

A VESUVIAN.—The mountain that would not go to Mahomet was certainly not Mount Vesuvius, for Vesuvius is often on the move. Recently it showed a disposition to go to Switzerland, and assume the title of Mount St. Burn-hard.—*Fun*.

RESULT OF DISOBEDIENCE.—"Peter, what's the matter with your eye?" "Eh? Oh, nothin'; only my wife said this morning I'd better get up and light the fire. I told her to make it herself. That's all."

A PAINFUL IMPRESSION.—The feelings of a boy, going to school for the first time, who reads that a master is wanted for "Blackrod Grammar School," and finds that the advertisement refers to the academy of which he is about to become a pupil, may be imagined but cannot be described.—*Punch*.

THE HOUSE OF CORRECTION.—"What is your hurry, Jimmy?" asked a kind lady of a precocious urchin on his way to school the other day. "Oh, I must go." "Where are you going, Jimmy?" With a heavy sigh, and pointing to the school-house, "In to the house of correction, ma'am!"

AN EFFECTUAL REMEDY.—An ingenious wife in Des Moines, afflicted with a snoring husband, has a gutta-percha pipe with cube-shaped ends; one she puts over his nose and mouth, and the other over his ears; thus he consumes his own noise, as a stove does its smoke, and wakes up instantly.

HEREDITARY.

Young Damsel: "Law, Mrs. Mumblebone, that boy can't be right in his head!"

Mrs. M: "Bless ye, miss, he can't be expected to be sick! His father died of disinterments, and his mother died of chronicle spasms, and his sister died of a broken leg, and his eldest brother died in jail. It runs in the family!"—*Fun*.

"TWO CAN KEEP COUNSEL, PUTTING ONE AWAY."—*Shakespeare*.

Mamma: "How splashed you are, Aliso! You must have been walking in all the puddles you could find!"

Aliso: "Well, mamma, Bob and Mary would walk on the side where there were no lamps!"

N.B.—Robert and Mary are engaged.—*Punch*.

TIT FOR TAT.—A meeting of agricultural labourers at Yaxley, Hunts, was broken-in upon by a lot of farmers and farmers' sons, who tried to drown the speaking by using "bird-clappers." The noise they

made was probably quite as reasonable as the talk such blockheads would be capable of. But their wooden utterances naturally provoked an appeal to another form of *argumentum baculinum*, and they got a sound thrashing. The verdict returned by the jury of public opinion is unanimous, if not novel—"served 'em right!"—*Punch*.

A GENTLE MONEY-TWIX.

Willie: "Auntie, have you seen the money-box George gave me last Christmas?"

Aunt: "No, Willie; but I suppose it's one of those that you can't get the money out of."

Willie: "I don't know, auntie—because you see I haven't been able to get any money into it yet!"—*Fun*.

A SARDONIC REPLY.—A party of men, animatedly engaged in discussing politics before a country shop attracted the attention of an aged agriculturist. "There's somethin' the matter here," he observed to his wife; and, drawing up his team, he lightly shouted to a consumptive individual on the outskirts, "What's afoot?" "Twelve inches," was this sardonic reply. The aged agriculturist drove on.

"THE BEST OF IT!"

First Gentleman Farmer: "Why, there goes that strolch, Billy Giles! Is he at his old tricks still?"

Second Ditto: "He has cheated everybody down about here, sir, except me! He tried it on this winter, but I was too clever for him! Sold me a cow, and—(triumphantly)—I made him take it back at half-price!"—*Punch*.

CONSOLATION.—There is more than one way of "talking on the subject of religion," and a better way, evidently, than the old lady had found whose husband lay wasting under a lingering disease. The rector expressed a hope that she sometimes spoke to him of the future. "I do, indeed, sir. Often and often I wake him in the night, and says, 'John, John, you little thinks of the torments as is preparing for you.'"

IRISH HUMOUR.

Giving a barmaid a crown at Limerick for a mug of ale, the price of which was but threepence, she smiled all over her face, and said:

"An' may yer worship nivir wahnt for a pound until I give ye change; and I wish ye sich luck that I know ye wouldn't be after askin' for a pinny of it."

Annoyed by a strapping girl, who insisted acting as guide at the Gap of Dunloe, I gave her a shilling on condition that she would follow me no farther. Before I had gone another mile she reappeared, when I reminded her of her promise.

"Will," she replied, "I losht the shillin' that ye was so goold as to give a poor girl the likes o' me, and I thought I'd come back to see if ye hadn't just found it."

Of course I handed her another, with the words: "You know, Norah, you are not telling the truth, but this time you must keep your word."

"An' will ye make a poor gurl, who's losht her heart to ye, confess in yer virry face that she's run two miles over dese rough rocks to git another look at yer han'bon' eyes?"

"What makes your horse so slow?" I asked one day in the Glen of the Downs of my Celtic Jehu.

"It is out of rispict to the bayutiful sanery, yer honour—he wants ye to see it all. An' this, he's an intelligent baste, and appreciates good company, an' wants to kape the likes o' ye in beloved ould Ireland as long as he kin."

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS.

We have been requested to publish the following programme of the various classes of objects, intended to be shown at the annual International Exhibitions during the remainder of the period which commenced in 1871, and will terminate in 1880. As many of the articles enumerated below require much time for their careful and complete preparation, and will have to be transported from distant countries, it is obvious that it must be an immense advantage to intending exhibitors to know beforehand the precise year when their specialities will be submitted to public inspection and cosmopolitan competition at South Kensington:—

1873.—Skates, slides for magic lanterns, &c., turtle in tanks; millinery, mathematical instruments, pen-ambulants, walking-sticks, and aerated waters.

1874.—Menageries, mangles, baths and wash-houses, games and sports, stove ornaments, hats, and draining tiles.

1875.—Poetage stamps, silkworms, artificial limbs, small arms, omnibuses, lightning-conductors, shows, spectacles, and other optical instruments.

1876.—Flags, asphalt and other pavements, yachts, medicine-chests, hothouses, waxwork, refrigerators, liveries and liqueurs.

1877.—Matches, wedding outfits, saddles and bridles, church-bells, confectionery (including bride-cakes), lighthouses, gasometers, and perfumery.

1878.—Agricultural implements, sewing machines, swimming apparatus, diving-bells, dry docks, dentistry, and gums.

1879.—Panoramas, patent medicines, parasols and umbrellas, circuses, chandlery, autographs, and bathing-machines.

1880.—Pipes and preparations of tobacco, apparatus for preventing and consuming smoke, observatories, orangeries, artificial flowers, acts of parliament, carriages-and-four, balloons, flying machines, fireworks, and anything that may have been omitted in previous years.

Fine arts, fine dresses, flirtations, refreshments, season tickets, turnstiles, catalogues, military bands, crowds of people, and grumblers every year.—*Punch*.

BEHIND THE BARN.

Why do you stay, grandfather,

Behind the barn, in the sun,

All day, till the orchard shadows

Go over you one by one?

To watch how the brook goes merry,

To see how the warm brown rift

Is left, as the plough goes onward

Where apple-tree blossoms drift?

I'm facing the sunset, lassie;

And here, in its glad bright glow,

Come shadows of old times, lassie,

Bright shadows of long ago.

The days that are gathered, lassie,

Seem waiting to meet me, dear,

And voices beloved, but silent,

Are whispering softly here.

I see a glorious Sabbath

Hang over yon hill-tops three;

A boy in his Sunday jacket

The sun watching wearily,

And when it sinks in the twilight,

The rogue, with a bound and cry,

Exults in the Sabbath ended—

Alas! and alas! was it I?

I see, through the rosy summer,

True lovers walk home this way,

Where only the birds can listen

To fond, foolish words they say.

I see cheeks pink as the blossom

Hold up but to shame their hue;

I hear a poor lad's confession

Of love. It was tender and true.

I see how a brain-worn doubter,

Misled by the pride of youth,

Comes here with the sombre twilight,

To wrestle for Light and Truth.

I hear, like a sighing presence,

The cry of a spirit torn;

I hear, a shout! Alleluia!

The shout of a faith new born.

So here, in this homely shadow,

I come from the friendless street;

I know, as I know not elsewhere,

What company here I'll meet.

Here watch till the golden sickle

Shall gather me safe and nigh;

For hands that are scarred, but sinless,

Shall garner me by-and-bye. E. L.

GEMS.

If you wish success in life make perseverance your bosom friend, experience your wise counsellor, caution your elder brother, and hope your guardian genius.

Misfortune and misconduct were born twins. Our faults are oft the parent of our woes, and he who most declaims at the world's frown has generally done his best to earn it.

In prosperity we are apt to feel too independent. It is when we stumble in dark and difficult ways, beneath starless skies, that we feel and acknowledge the blessings of light.

The highest excellence is seldom attained in more than one vocation. The roads leading to distinction in separate pursuits diverge, and the nearer we approach the one the farther we recede from the other.

DR. FRANKLIN, speaking of education, says: "If a man empties his purse into his head no man can take it away from him. An investment of knowledge always pays the best interest."

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

ARTIFICIAL BUTTER.—The fat or oil is heated in a shallow vessel until it begins to fry, the action of which is owing to the violent evaporation of the water contained in the fat. After this is all driven off the fat becomes still hotter, but it is absolutely necessary that the heat shall be so regulated as not to be pushed

to the boiling point of the fat itself, but a few degrees below it. A temperature of about 300 degrees Fahr. is required, and a little water should be cautiously sprinkled from time to time upon the fat while at that temperature, after the water that it originally contained has frizzled away. The process is continued until the purification is completed, and the hot fat is then strained, and if the process has been properly conducted it is found to be pure, colourless, and tasteless, besides becoming smooth like butter. Invented by M. Dubrunfaut and M. Charles Fua during the siege of Paris.

STATISTICS.

THE ANNUAL POOR RATE RETURN.—In the year ending at Lady Day, 1871, the receipts for "poor rate" in England amounted to 12,121,440*l.*—viz., 11,610,920*l.* from the ratepayers and 510,520*l.* receipts in aid, this last item including the repayments by Her Majesty's Treasury. The above levy from the ratepayers amounted to 10*s.* 2*d.* per head on the population, being 8*d.* less per head than in the preceding year; the total amount levied increased, but not so much as the population. The expenditure amounted to 12,002,741*l.*—viz., 7,886,724*l.* in relief to the poor and 4,206,017*l.* for other purposes; this last item showing that more than one-third of the amount levied as poor rates is expended for other purposes than the relief of the poor. The expenditure on relief of the poor was 5*s.* 2*d.* per head on the population—viz., 6*s.* 11*d.*—was a fraction less. The average price of wheat was 49*s.* 8*d.* per quarter, being 3*s.* 6*d.* more than in the preceding year. The expenditure for relief to the poor comprised 1,524,695*l.* for maintenance, 8,663,970*l.* for out-relief, 746,113*l.* for maintenance of lunatics in asylums, 291,284*l.* workhouse loans repaid and interest, 838,263*l.* salaries, &c., of officers (including sums repaid by the Treasury), and 810,013*l.* other expenses, including contributions to the metropolitan asylum district amounting to 71,108*l.*; the cost of the Hampstead fever hospital was unusually heavy, owing to the outbreak of small-pox. The expenditure on relief to the poor varied greatly in different parts. In the metropolis it was double that of the north-western division of England, which has a larger population. There are four divisions of England, each with a population between 1,400,000 and 1,500,000, but the rate of their expenditure on relief varied as follows:—It was 634,354*l.* in the south midland division, 517,710*l.* in the Welsh, 441,264*l.* in the north midland, and only 338,553*l.* in the northern division. The expenditure from the poor rate in the year for purposes unconnected with relief included 2,708,840*l.* for county, borough, and police rate; 648,846*l.* for highway boards; 87,244*l.* for constables' expenses and proceedings before justices; 78,323*l.* for registration of births, &c.; 73,175*l.* for vaccination; 70,373*l.* for Parliamentary or municipal registration and jury lists; 53,993*l.* for assessment expenses. The rateable value of property assessed to the poor rate in England has been returned for the year 1869-70—viz., 104,420,283*l.*; in that year the amount levied as poor rate was 2*s.* 2*d.* in the pound on that rateable value, and the sum expended for relief to the poor amounted to 1*s.* 5*d.* in the pound on that rateable value.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A PETITION against the use of the "cat" has been presented to Parliament by 500 women.

An opera house is now being built at Auckland, New Zealand.

CROWN PRINCESS MARGUERITE, on her christening visit to Crown Princess Victoria at Berlin, brings her a bracelet bought at 2,800*l.* at Castellani's, Rome.

The oldest theatre in Florence is the Pergola, founded in 1738, and the most recent the Principe Umberto, built in 1869. There are in all 16 in the city, able to contain together 24,700 spectators.

According to a local paper there are now living in the village of Tovil, near Maidstone, eleven men and women whose united ages amount to 907 years, the oldest being 88 and the youngest 79.

A NEW YORK telegram announces that four steamers and nearly forty sailing vessels engaged in the seal-fishing trade on the coast of Labrador and Newfoundland have been wrecked among the ice, and that all hands have perished.

A NEW STIMULANT.—Tea and coffee are threatened with a rival in a Brazilian tree called Guarana. This tree produces a fruit of about the size of a walnut. Each fruit contains five or six seeds, which are roasted, mixed with water, and dried. When used the seeds must be ground into powder. The active principle is an alkaloid similar to that in tea or coffee, but twice as abundant. Guarana produces the same effect as the better-known stimulants.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

BONA FIDE.—In these days there are such things as Life Assurance Policies "payable to bearer." If such a policy has been presented to you it may be made available by you, because it is transferable simply by delivery. As a rule however life assurance policies can only be assigned by deed, which should be drawn by a careful professional man, who would advise concerning any concomitant steps desirable to be taken. However, a practical and inexpensive course for you to take is to acquaint the secretary of the office by which the policy was granted with the facts of your case, and to do as he may suggest.

A. J.—The first thing you must do is to bear your trouble with patience and with truth. Then seek from acquaintances such small pecuniary aid as they can afford. After all the world is not so bitter as to refuse its aid in such a case if the sufferer is not too proud to ask, and will go about the business in a sincere, earnest, and thrifty way. There is a well-known institution named after Queen Charlotte at which you could make personal inquiries. The workhouse and such gloomy forebodings should not be thought of.

"Beware of desperate steps; the darkest day,
Live till the morrow, will have passed away."

MERRY ALICE.—A beautiful canary not long ago in its eager desire of change flew through the doorway of its cage, accidentally left open, on to the house-top, having wandered some days in the vain pursuit of shelter and food, it pined and died. A little girl to whom the lifeless bird was shown begged for it in order that she might place it in a garden grave. As she sorrowfully prepared a resting-place for "pretty little dicky" she wondered what would be her fate if she willfully left a home where she was tenderly cared for, admired, and beloved, in search of new admirers and imaginary joys. Alice will be kind enough to consider the above anecdote an answer to her request.

RICHARD B.—The following is perhaps the account of which you are in search concerning certain practices prevalent among young people on the first of April, which day has been gravely chronicled in some almanacs as "All Fools' Day." "The Jews have a tradition that the origin of the custom of performing practical jokes on this day dates from Noah's mistake in sending the dove out of the Ark before the waters had abated; therefore, among the Hebrews on the first day of the month which answers to our month of April it was thought proper to perpetuate the memory of this deliverance, and, if any forgot to do so, they were punished by being sent upon some vain errand similar to that ineffectual message upon which the bird was sent by the Patriarch."

ANXIOUS ONE.—1. If the mothers of illegitimate children suffer the payments, directed to be made by an affiliation order, to remain in arrear for more than thirteen weeks, without application to a justice of the peace, they cannot recover for more than thirteen weeks. Your plan therefore is to revive the matter before the court by which the order was made every three months until the money is paid, or the whereabouts of the putative father is discovered. 2. You have done wrong. You should have applied to the judge to be allowed to pay the money into the County Court. You cannot strictly set off the amount for goods supplied by you against the judgment your creditor has obtained; but if he presses you under the judgment you should be careful to attend the summons he must take out against you for that purpose, and tell your whole story to the judge with a patient firmness.

JOHN JONES.—As a street exhibitor of a galvanic apparatus is not excepted by the saving clauses of "The Pedlars Act, 1870," it is probable he would come under those words of the interpretation clause which describe the term pedlar to mean, amongst other things, any person who without any horse or other beast bearing or drawing burden goes about "selling or offering for sale his skill in handicraft." If this view be correct such an exhibitor must obtain from the chief officer of police of the police district in which the exhibitor resides a pedlar's certificate, for which a charge of sixpence for each year is made. The police officer will require to be satisfied that the applicant is a person of good character. An appeal from the decision of the police officer can be made to a justice of the peace or a magistrate. By the Act sundry penalties can be enforced, with the nature of which a pedlar or a person desiring to become a pedlar should make himself acquainted.

A YOUTH.—Ordinary barometers are expensive articles, and, to an amateur, are difficult of construction. The following method of becoming weather-wise has been successfully tested. Obtain a Florence oil-flask; remove from it the coat of rushes, and wash it out with a lye of

soda. Also procure a bottle of any kind with neck wide enough to receive the flask inverted. Fill the bottle with water, and carefully invert the flask, and insert it neck downwards, so that it can float in the fashion of a balloon. The water will enter the flask an inch or two, and a balance will be established. To turn the contrivance to account it must be watched, and the amount of water in the flask will as a rule afford an indication of the weather to be expected. Thus, if the flask rises so that there is scarcely any water left in it, a storm may be expected; while, on the other hand, if the water rises slowly, a long period of fine weather may be anticipated. This barometer, practically speaking, is a perfect instrument; for the air within the flask is balanced against the whole body of the atmosphere, and therefore, though cheap and unpretentious, it need not be despised.

DIDO.—There is a small mythological dictionary published by Mr. Murray which would perhaps answer your purpose. If not, old "Lempriere" is not marked at a very high price at the second-hand book-stalls. You could also read with advantage portions of some English translation of Virgil's "Gæoid." In the earlier books of this epic you can learn how and what Dido suffered when, inflamed by Cupid's arts—

"The dead is to the living love resigned,
And all Eneas enters in her mind."

Thus much for the first portion of your inquiry. As to the second, the story of Theseus and Ariadne has been told by many ancient poets, and has furnished a theme for several works of ancient art. In latter times Titian's painting of the subject has been much admired, and later still Mr. Langhorne's translation of "Plutarch" has placed within the English reader's reach many versions of this favourite story. Dido and Ariadne were alike in one particular—overwhelmed with grief, they destroyed themselves. Both were devoted to their lovers, both were the victims of inconstancy, and both suffered severely from the flame of love by which, figuratively, their hearts were consumed.

DON'T PROMISE TOO MUCH.

It is always your duty, you know,
To do just the best that you can;
Though your station be ever so low,
You can rise to the height of a man.
Be manly in morals and speech,
Give tongue to whatever you touch;
And learn just how far you can reach,
For fear you may promise too much.
Don't promise, though often you feel
Your heart is with sympathy warm,
Your purpose you'd better conceal
Till sure that you've strength to perform.
Perchance some poor friend, whose weak arm
Has leaned on this treacherous crutch,
Has come to some desperate harm
Because you have promised too much.
'Tis kindness that prompts you to say
The words that are sweet to the ear,
But cruel it is to delay
The help that you promised was near.
The deeds that are trifles to you
By some are not reckoned as such;
So do what you've promised to do,
And be sure you don't promise too much.

J. P.

LOVING LIZZIE, twenty-one, tall, fair, and domesticated, was one of the ladies who responded to "Harold the Gunner."

MINKIE, seventeen, tall, fair, and well educated. Respondent must be tall, dark, not positively ugly, and a resident in Edinburgh; an Irishman preferred.

EMMA S. twenty-three, tall, fair complexion, blue eyes. Respondent must be fond of home, dark, a good mechanic, steady, and loving.

LIZZIE F. twenty-three, short, a domestic, fair, blue eyes, can make a home comfortable. Respondent must be dark, about twenty-six, steady, loving, fond of home, and a respectable mechanic.

JAMES W. twenty-one, 5ft. 7in., fair complexion, handsome, good musician. Respondent must be good looking, medium height, loving, and not over twenty-one; complexion no object.

MAUDE MAY, nineteen, tall, rather dark, very fond of music and dancing, and domesticated. Would like to marry a tall, fair, gentleman about twenty-five or thirty, with a loving heart.

TRUE BLUE, twenty-one, medium height, dark-brown hair and eyes, a good scholar and very fond of music. Respondent must be about nineteen, fair, and of a loving disposition.

WILDFIRE, nineteen, rather tall, pretty and dark, would like to marry a gentleman in Birmingham, who is rather tall, from twenty-one to twenty-three, very loving and good tempered, and in good circumstances.

EMMA B. nineteen, tall, fair, very fond of music and dancing, and of a loving disposition, would like to marry a tall, dark young man who has a little business of his own.

G. B. W. twenty-three, 5ft. 8in., dark and handsome, and a tradesman's son. Respondent must be about twenty, handsome, domesticated, fond of music, and make a loving wife.

A LOVELY ONE, twenty-one, medium height, pretty, domesticated, and very fond of singing, would like to correspond with a young man who is tall, and of a loving disposition.

TEDDY W. thirty, 5ft. 7in., a tradesman, and able to keep a wife comfortably, wishes to marry a tall, amiable young lady who could make a home happy, must be fond of children.

ESTELLE and LALLA ROOKH. "Estelle" twenty-two, 5ft. 2in., dark complexion, brown hair, blue eyes, and domesticated, wishes to marry a tall, dark young man, about twenty-four; a respectable mechanic preferred. "Lalla Rookh," eighteen, dark complexion, brown hair

and eyes, loving and thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must be a fair young man about twenty, a tradesman preferred.

WORKING BOB, twenty-two, tall, dark hair and eyes, and has a little money. Respondent must be tall, handsome, and willing to keep a home comfortable, a carpenter's daughter preferred.

ELLEN, twenty-four, tall, dark hair, fair complexion, good looking, domesticated, and loving. Respondent must be industrious, and loving, and able to keep a wife comfortably.

HARRIET, nineteen, tall, dark, pretty, and very fond of children. Respondent must be about twenty-two, tall, dark, handsome, and make a good husband; a baker preferred.

NANCY, eighteen, tall, fair complexion, gray eyes, auburn hair, domesticated, fond of home, and will make a loving wife to a good husband. Respondent should be tall, dark, fond of home, and able to keep a wife comfortably.

DARK EYED CARRIE, who is rather nice looking, wishes to correspond with a very respectable young man with a view to marriage; "Carrie" is twenty, medium height, very loving, and is sure she could make home happy.

H. WELLINGTON, twenty-three, holds a fair position, and from his superior abilities and intellect has every prospect of rising to distinction, desires to marry a young lady of income. He is rather tall, dark, healthy, good tempered, well cultivated, and a good figure.

IDA LEE, seventeen, a publican's daughter, tall, dark, clear complexion, considered handsome; can do almost anything from cooking a dinner to playing the piano, can make herself comfortable in any society, and is a splendid singer. Respondent must be a publican's son, tall, and of a loving disposition; only those who are in earnest should reply.

ONLY DAUGHTER, twenty-three, tall, dark, very handsome, highly educated, and accomplished, of amiable disposition and manners, wish domesticated, and would adorn any home, character irreproachable. Respondent should be of refined tastes, tall, of gentlemanly manners, and education, holding a situation under government, or engaged in a business.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

J. B. is responded to by—"Nelly," who answers his description.

FRED S. by—"N." twenty-six, 5ft. 2in., brown hair, blue eyes, rather stout, and of a loving disposition.

HARRIET S. by—"Favourite Ned," twenty-two, tall, fair complexion, and a steward in the Navy.

EDWARD A. by—"Alice T.," who is all he wishes for.

ROTHIE G. by—"A. L.," 5ft 6in., dark complexion, brown hair, and good looking.

J. H. M. by—"A. G.," twenty, very domesticated and economical; would make a loving wife.

JOE K. S. by—"Nancy," who is everything he requires.

CONSTANCY by—"Dark-eyed Sailor," twenty-five, 5ft. 7in., dark-brown hair, blue eyes, loving disposition.

F. C. M. D. by—"Meggy," medium height, domesticated, pretty, fond of home, would make an affectionate wife; has had a plain education.

HARRY H. by—"Lillian," nineteen, tall, fair, violet eyes, considered pretty, fond of music and children, only daughter, and has 80l. yearly for her own right.

ALBERT C. by—"Ella," nineteen, steady, pretty, fond of children, and would try her best to make Albert's home comfortable.

MINKIE by—"Carrie," who thinks she would just suit him; she is a domestic servant, twenty-one, medium height, dark, passable looking, could make home happy, and is very respectable.

A. J. by—"B. J. H.," twenty-nine, medium height, fair complexion, dark hair, fond of music, of a loving disposition, will shortly be going abroad—service fourteen years in Royal Artillery.

FRED C. by—"Ada," twenty, medium height, loving, fond of home, industrious, would make a good wife, rather fair, has a good trade, and thinks "Fred C." could suit her.

WALTER S. by—"Nella," eighteen, tall, has dark curly hair, and is thought pretty, has learnt drawing and music, and is very fond of both and thinks she is the one "Walter" requires.

GEORGE B. by—"Clara," twenty, rather tall, dark, and affectionate, is considered handsome, and an excellent singer. Thinks she would suit "George" in every way.

RUPERT C. S. is requested to send "Marina" more complete particulars.

ROYAL TRUCK wishes to hear from "Annie L."

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